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GOOD ADVICE:
IN A
LETTER to a FRIEND,
CONCERNING
The MODERN WAY
OF
FREE-THINKING.

WITH A
POSTSCRIPT
CONTAINING

Some Remarks on the Rise and Progress of
Free-thinking; As also a seasonable Caution to
young Divines and others, in Reading Dr.
Clark's Scripture Doctrine of the *Trinity*; Shew-
ing the most notorious *Insincerity*, in his *Quo-*
tations from the Ancient Writers of the Chris-
tian Church, in order to Propagate an *old He-*
resy, which that Author reviv'd.

L O N D O N :

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The Modern Way

OF

FREE-TALKING



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Good Advice:

IN A

LETTER to a FRIEND.

S I R,

YOU are pleas'd sometimes to tell me, that you are a *Free-thinker*: I now as frankly own, that I am one too: why then this great Difference between us in our Notions of Religion? There must be a Fault, and a very great one, on one Side or the other; give me leave then to enquire into this Affair, since 'tis by no means trivial; nay, certainly one of the last Importance. I promise you my Enquiries shall be sincere and impartial; I only beg you will read

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with

with the same kind Disposition, as I write for the finding out the Truth; and if that Treasure shall be discovered, and appear in the same Light equally valuable to us both, our present Difference must then be at an End in course, and, in the main, we shall think the same Way in Matters of Religion: But should these Enquiries not have the desired Effect, I am persuaded this Trouble given by a long Letter, will be easily forgiven, because he that writes it, cannot be thought to mean any thing else but real Service to a Gentleman he so much values and esteems.

Now, Sir, what else can be the first and most obvious Notion of *Free-thinking*, but that the Operations of the Soul of Men are *free*? 'Tis a thinking Substance, and must be a Substance distinct from Matter, because *Matter* is not capable of Thought; 'Tis a Substance (we all find) that reflects, wills, judges, accuses or excuses in the several Actions of Life; and we are both agreed, I am very sure, that 'tis a Task too hard for any Mortal to limit or restrain our *Thinking* in this respect: Freedom of Thought therefore is natural, and none but the God of Nature can take it from us. Thus far then, Sir, You and I are both *Free-thinkers* alike: But what will this Freedom avail us, or how

how shall we think to any good Purpose, if no Rule, no Method be prescribed in our Way of thinking ? It must be granted then, that if we think as we ought, it must be done in such a manner as becomes a *reasonable* Creature, otherwise we are so far from being *Free-thinkers*, that our Understandings are really hamper'd and confin'd in the Search after Truth. Neither will you deny, that our Passions too often cast a Mist before our Understanding ; which will ever be the Case, when we take the Freedom of advancing Opinions of our own, according to Fancy, Humour or Interest. This is not *Free-thinking*, because you cannot say, 'tis judging according to Evidence, and suitably to the Nature of Things ; for how can those rational Faculties that God has given us for that purpose, be truly said to be at *Liberty*, as they ought to be, so long as our corrupted Wills, Prejudice, or any settled Aversion shall have the Ascendant ? so that we are then properly *Free-thinkers*, when our Understandings are really at Liberty to make a serious and careful Examination both of the Truth and Certainty, and also of the Importance of all that is proposed and received.

'Tis evident then, that if Pride, Self-conceit, Affectation of Novelty, and Singularity, or a Spirit of Levity and Derision shall happen to be indulged in our Search after Truth, we cannot be said to *think freely* in any just Sense, because these Passions byass the Understanding, and as often make us miscarry in finding out the Meaning and Evidence of what is propos'd to us.

We are here then to Examine ourselves first; and you see I am so far from opposing *Free-thinking*, that I am truly arguing for it; nay, our very *Obligation* to *Free-thinking*, I'll venture to say, is what will be as readily own'd by all Men of Sense: But then you easily perceive, and it must therefore be farther agreed by us, that it cannot be term'd *Free-thinking*, so long as our rational Faculties are so confin'd that they cannot exert themselves as becomes a reasonable Creature. You cannot, as some do, call this Way of arguing *Dull Thinking*; you see who it is that is properly and truly the *Free-thinker*; 'tis not thinking wildly or extravagantly upon any Proposition; 'tis not jesting, which is inconsistent with serious Consideration; nor is it giving ourselves up to ridicule Doctrines and Opinions, when at the same time our reasoning Powers

Powers are in such a State of *Bondage*, that we neither will nor can perceive the Truth and Importance of them. But he that intends to think freely and wisely, must resolve to be serious and deliberate, humble and modest, as becomes the Creature ; cautious indeed against Imposition and Delusion, but then always readily dispos'd to admit what is well attest-ed ; for otherwise you can't deny our *Free-thinking* is justly to be questioned ; because we receive only what we like, and lay a Prohibition upon what we do not like, which is certainly inconsistent with *Free-thinking*, and (I hope you will own) very unbecoming a free impartial Thinker.

Now, Sir, if this Notion of *Free-thinking* be just and true, it shews how unreasonable those Complaints are, which we so often hear of now a Days, of Restraints from *Free-thinking*, and the many Discouragements to it ; whereas, you cannot but observe, there is just Reason to retort, and to complain of such sort of Free-thinkers, who depart from the true and proper Notion of *Free-thinking*, and under the Colour of that *innocent* Term, are continually obtruding upon the World those many crude, irrational Schemes for undermining the Christian Religion.

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Has not God made it our Duty to think *freely* and *wisely*, and has he not given us reasonable Faculties for this End? Let me entreat you then not to hearken to the fatal Whispers of too many who set up for such sort of *Free-thinkers*; some of whom have ignorantly suppos'd, and others as falsely represented, that the Christian Religion is securest, when there is the least *Enquiry* made into it: But there cannot be a viler Suggestion, since the Christian Religion stands upon so sure a Foundation, that the strictest Enquiry cannot shake it; nay, I'll venture to say, *Free-thinking* will do real Service, and the more any one considers the Evidence of the Christian Religion, its Doctrines, Precepts and Instructions, the more steadfast and immoveable he will be in the Profession of it, and more careful to observe it; and therefore 'tis, that the Scriptures frequently call upon us, to *see*, to *search*, to *consider*, &c. We justly complain then of the *Church of Rome* in this Particular; for Ignorance is not the Mother of Devotion with us: *Free-thinking* is not forbid by our Church, no more than 'tis by the Gospel: Nothing with us is propos'd or requir'd, which is not shew'd to be contain'd in Scripture; nor is the Scripture impos'd by implicit Faith; for
undoubted

undoubted Proofs are laid before us ; nor are we deny'd the Writings of *Friends* or *Enemies* ; no where in the World is there more Opportunity, or greater Helps for knowing the Truth ; so that if we are but heartily dispos'd to be such sort of *Free-thinkers* as the noble *Bereans* were, we shall search, and see with our own Eyes, whether what is said be true ; we shall ourselves judge how little we follow *cunningly devised Fables*, and how far the Church of *England* is from taking Advantage of Peoples supposed Credulity, and how careful to distinguish the Doctrines of Men, from the real Word of God : Why then all this Noise and Clamour about Restraints to *Free-thinking* here ? The *Free-thinking* in the Manner I have described it (and surely it cannot have any other just Sense or Meaning) is so far from being obstructed amongst us, that 'tis pronounc'd by all Men of Sense to be *true Wisdom* ; for 'tis the way to advance in Knowledge, Perfection and Happiness ; and consequently nothing can be more becoming a rational Creature.

A Restraint in this Case, I readily own, would be a Grievance justly to be complain'd of ; and in whatever Country 'tis found, I shall always ascribe it, either to ignorant, or cunning, designing Men, whose

whose Counfels and Projects will not abide a Tryal. But you know, dear Sir, 'tis not fo in this envied Isle of ours; nay, you must agree with me farther, because 'tis notorious, that there is fo little Reason to complain of obftructing *Free-thinking* by unjust and unreaſonable Reſtraints in this Nation, that, alas! there is too much Reason to complain of the Remiſſneſs of both the Civil and Eccleſiaſtical Government againſt licentious Writings; ſcandalous, impious and blaſphemous Pamphlets almoſt every Week broach'd amongſt us, affronting our civil Conſtitution, as well as our eſtabliſh'd Religion.

I appeal to your own Obſervation in Coffee-houſes and elſewhere, whether by *Free-thinking* is not often inſinuated, if not aſſerted, an Indifferency and Unconcernedneſs as to all received Opinions relating to God, Revelation and Religion? But ſhall this be call'd *Free-thinking*? or rather, Is not this turning Free-thinking into Stupidity and Want of Thought? For can that Perſon be ſaid truly to *think*, who is unconcern'd whether there be a God, or whether God has ever revealed himſelf to Men, and does require any particular Behaviour of them? whether the Goſpel be true, and a future Life certain, and what are the neceſſary Conditions for obtaining

taining eternal Happiness? We are both agreed, I persuade my self, that nothing can be of greater Moment than the Truth of these Things, neither should any thing be studied more seriously: for if these Things be true and certain, we cannot acquit our selves like wise Men, if we will not examine or enquire into the Truth of them, as others have done; in short, he that does not do this, instead of thinking *freely*, he ties up his own Reason, and makes the nearest Approaches to a Brute, only mov'd by present outward Objects,

I don't wonder that such as set up for *Free-thinkers* in this Manner, declaim so much as they do, against *Guides, Directors,* and *Teachers*; that they ought to be all thrown off, and that such as hearken to 'em are *Priest-ridden*, &c. But what does all this mean? Your own good Sense, Sir, must tell you, what a false, as well as a foolish, thing it is to say, that Direction and Information hinders *Free-thinking*? He that is truly a *Free-thinker*, will always avoid two Extreames, *Credulity* on the one Hand, and *Incredulity* on the other, because they are both equally unreasonable. *Credulity* is the Effect of Weakness; and an obstinate *Incredulity* betrays Perverseness; a credulous Temper lies open to Error and Delusion, and a pertinacious *Incredulity* will always

bar out Truth. But why must *Priest-craft* be objected, and the Clergy rail'd at, as promoting *Credulity*, being one Extream that ought to be avoided? Is their Knowledge so small and narrow, that their Conversation will occasion such *Credulity*, and make others as weak as themselves? Or will any Man of Honour tell me, that a Clergyman will, for the sake of some worldly Interest, incourage *Credulity*, if contrary to his Knowledge of Things, and the clear Conviction of his own Mind? But if the Clergy are able to help and assist in these Matters, shall such Assistance be termed a Restraint of *Free-thinking*? If such Instruction or Teaching shall be deemed inconsistent with *Free-thinking*, why shall not *Reading* be thought so too? And if this be reasonable, then why are not Books to be laid aside as well as the *Priests*, as it is in *Turky*, where neither Printing nor Books have been allowed in relation to *Mahomet* or the *Alcoran*? For should they by these Means be permitted to think *freely* of both, the Error of *both* would be discovered.

We readily acknowledge the Usefulness and Necessity of Guides and Teachers, as to the learning any Art or Science: why then should there be such a strong Aversion to *them* in Religion? what other or better Account can be given of it, than that such sort of *Free-thinkers* would have all People

ple as ignorant of Religion, as they must be of other Sciences without Instruction? This is making *Free-thinking* an obstinate *Incredulity*, and it gives too much Reason to suspect Atheism and Irreligion at the Bottom.

For let such Gentlemen who call this Suspicion groundless, (as I have often heard it called) give some better Reason than telling us, with a shew of Argument only, that Men will not be Atheists by *Free-thinking*: This is evading, but not arguing with any Colour of Reason: Indeed, let *Free-thinking* be taken in it's right Sense, and what these Gentlemen say is very true: For neither Atheism nor Deism are the Effects of *true-thinking* upon what may be observed from serious Enquiries: But yet for all this, take *Free-thinking* in the Manner these Gentlemen contend for, I can see no Injustice in charging it with introducing Atheism and Irreligion.

I dare appeal to your self, Sir, who I'm persuaded have not gone any such Lengths, whether in your conversing with Men of this Stamp, or in reading their Discourses upon this Subject, you have not sometimes observed indecent and irreverent Expressions of God? whether the Fear of God has not been represented as idle Superstition? Whether Intercourse betwixt God and Man

has not been reflected on as a Cheat and Delusion? Whether the Christian Religion has not been made a Jest of, as much as Paganism? and whether the *Alcoran* has not been brought in Competition with the Holy Scripture? And yet this is acting against the Rule given them by their great Master *Hobbs*, who says, *when a Religion is established, it ought not to be controverted, be it of what kind soever*; whilst these Men offer nothing in Favour of the established Religion, and chuse rather to plead for any *other* than the Christian, into which they have been baptized. Upon the Whole, give me leave to say, that the Generality of our *Free-thinkers*, as they love to call themselves (tho' by a very improper Name) are either very ignorant, or very much imposed on, or else must have thrown off all Modesty in regard to their daily Libels against the Clergy; this appears plain enough in many of their Arguments that are produced by 'em, either in Conversation or in their Writings, to support their Infidelity; I have here collected the most material of them, which I dont doubt you have either heard or read likewise. The laying them before you, and making such Reply as shall be judged proper, shall be the Business of the remaining Part of this Letter; and I flatter my self with Hopes of giving you such Satisfaction

tisfaction, that for the future we shall both be *Free-Thinkers* alike, without any material Difference.

I have heard some Free-thinkers, then, so very whimsical in their Notions of Free-thinking, as to run a Parallel between that and *Free-painting*; that as the Art of Painting is advanc'd by being *free*, and all Encouragement given to it, so Free-thinking might have the like good Effects, were it encourag'd in all its *Latitude*: But you can't but observe the Absurdity of such Comparison: For Painting and Thinking have quite different Ends, and cannot be carried on in the same Manner, and after the same Method.

The Art of Painting is chiefly intended to please, and therefore the Painter is allow'd to follow his own Fancy, that he may give a surprising Delight to the Fancy of others. Those fine *Italian* Pieces, where such Encouragement is given, are not admired for any real Likeness, or near Resemblance, so much as for their lively Colours, their artful Shades, and the bold Strokes of the Painters Imagination: But the End of Thinking is to find out Truth, which is most likely to be found by keeping the right Method, by attending to the proper Rules, and by observing strictly and impartially those Means which may bring us to it.

it. These, if you please, may be called *Restraints*; but they are certainly highly reasonable, and very necessary; for if these be laid aside, and Liberty given every wild Imagination to rove, our Thoughts and Notions would be as unlike to Truth, as some admired Pictures are to their pretended Originals.

I have heard other Free-thinkers very lavish in Commendation of all the Heathen Authors, without paying any Respect or Honour to the Sacred Writers; not considering, or rather not knowing, that the Beauties or Excellencies in those Authors may be made appear to be deriv'd from the Sacred Writers themselves. At other Times, I have observed those Gentlemen commending the *Bible* only by way of Banter, to fright away the Simple and Unlearned from reading that Book; declaring, that there is not, perhaps, a Book in the World, that treats of such Variety of Things as the *Bible* does; (which Declaration has indeed more of Truth in it than they are aware of:) But then they declare withal, that this Bible cannot be understood without Philosophy, and the Knowledge of all Nature, History, Geography, Chronology, Geometry, and all Mathematicks, as well as other Sciences: And if so, 'tis in vain for the Generality to attempt the Reading of it; and then the *Restraint* given by it would be

be taken off. I need only to observe, that there is certainly in the Holy Scriptures Matter enough to exercise the Judgment and Understanding of the greatest, the most learned, and the most knowing Men: But withal, believe me, Sir, the same Scriptures *give Wisdom unto the Simple*, and make the Unlearned *Wise unto Salvation*; which is the main Scope and Design of those Writings.

I have had sometimes to do with Free-thinkers, who run a sort of Comparison betwixt *Free-seeing* and Free-thinking. This is done in Derision of that *saving Faith* propos'd in the Scriptures; *Faith is the Substance of Things hoped for, and the Evidence of Things not seen*: But what say these Gentlemen? Why, they tell you, to restrain Seeing, and to oblige others to subscribe a Confession of Eye-sight Faith, is a Fancy that can hardly come into any Mens Heads, unless it be of cunning, projecting Fellows, &c. I hope you have not gone so far in *Free-thinking*—For the Reflection is carried not only against the present Ministers of the Gospel, but the Prophets and Apostles themselves. But where's the Reasoning or Argument in all this? When Men act thus, is it not too visible that they are transported with Spite, Malice, and unreasonable Prejudices, too often forgetting those Ornaments of a Gentleman, Honour, Probity, and

and Veracity? However, let's see what the Comparison amounts to, *To restrain Seeing, and oblige others to subscribe a Confession of Eye-sight Faith, &c.* Is not such a Comparison ridiculous, meer Nonsense? Is not the Inuendo or Inference apparently wicked, in order to raise a Prejudice against the Christian Religion, against the Authors and Ministers of it, as if they combin'd together to put out Mens Eyes, to destroy their Senses, and to take away their Reason? And as if the Articles of the Christian Faith were like those absurd and nonsensical Articles of *Eye-sight**, which such Free-thinkers frame to themselves, and which are too scandalous to be repeated.

I have observ'd already, true *Free-thinking* is so far from being forbidden, that it is commanded, and all reasonable Helps and Encouragements are given to it. And tho' Faith be requir'd, it is only in Things which cannot be seen; and the Belief of them is requir'd upon the best Authority, even upon the Authority of God himself, which ought to be received as a Demonstration of the Truth. Let me beg of you, to this Purpose, to read over carefully and impartially the Evidence set forth in a late Treatise call'd, *An Appeal to the Genuine*

* The Reader may see those Articles, if he pleases, in a Pamphlet call'd, *A Discourse concerning the Rise and Growth of a Sect call'd Free-thinkers.*

Records and Testimonies of Heathen and Jewish Writers. We appeal——and therefore don't complain, Sir, of *Restraints*; and if no *Restraints*, either shew the *Appeal* to be false, or submit to the Truth and Consequences of it. Men are called upon to see with their own Eyes the Articles of their Faith written in clear Characters, in that Book which God by Miracles and Prophecies, and other undoubted Signs (as is shewn in that Treatise) has attested to be his, and the Declaration of his Will. Shall we after this not believe, and without enquiring, screen ourselves under the Name of *Free-thinkers*? Or shall Divine Revelation be discredited, because it contains Things which *Eye hath not seen*, nor Ear heard, and which otherwise could not have enter'd into the Heart of Man? Nothing sure can be more unreasonable: And yet, I fear, this is a sort of *Free-thinking* you too often hear pleaded for. We are all bid, you know, *to be ready to answer every one that asketh a Reason of the Hope that is in us*: But the Influence of a Christian Faith and Hope, can never be great upon that Person who is ignorant of the *Evidence* and sure Foundation of these Things. Whereas he that *sees* (and may you and I be so happy as to see in this our Day) a sure, certain and
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clear Divine Revelation for all that is to be believed and hoped for; such a one *will be stedfast, immoveable, and always abounding in every Work of the Lord, knowing that his Labour shall not be in vain.* Don't then impute it to *Priestcraft*, I earnestly beseech you, when I desire you to look into the sure Foundation of the Christian Religion; which certainly will be doing yourself the greatest Kindness, as it will be also a great Encouragement to our *Ministry.*

There is a merry Argument that I know is sometimes urg'd by *Free-thinkers*, which is, that the Devil is banish'd entirely the *United Provinces*; and why? Because, say they, *Free-thinking* there is in the greatest Perfection. I don't suppose you expect I should enter into any Dispute whether the Devil is really banish'd those Provinces or no: But that *Free-thinking*, in the Sense these Gentlemen of ours take it, is *there* in the greatest Perfection, is so notoriously false, that nothing can be more. I will venture to affirm, that if Persons *there*, are so bold as to vent their Thoughts disagreeable and dangerous to the Constitution, or such as cast Reproaches on Religion in general, or that which is established there, and incorporated with the State; if this be done, either by Discourses
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in *Coffee-Houses*, or by Writing, they are presently taken Notice of, and chastis'd. 'Tis true, different Sects are tolerated in the United Provinces; nor could it well be avoided, when you consider that their Liberty from the *Spanish-Yoke* was retriev'd by the joynt Concurrence of *all* of them; But remember, good Sir, the Government and Administration of Affairs, are *only* in the Hands of those call'd *Calvinists*; and yet they are not the most numerous neither: And besides Jews, they tolerate only profess'd Christians; neither Atheists nor Socinians; even the last must disguise themselves, and walk under the Mask of Arminians or Anabaptists, or else quit the Country; nor is there such Liberty, as some imagine, of the Press in *Holland*: For Books against the State or Religion, are known to bear the Name of some Place not belonging to 'em; And if such Discourses of *Free-thinking*, as our Pamphlet Shops swarm with, were publish'd in *Holland*, the Authors would either be confin'd to the *Rasp-House*, or fin'd and banish'd those Provinces. I speak this with very good Authority, and appeal to your Friends that have been Travellers.

'Tis a certain Topick amongst these Free-Gentry of ours, whether in their Books, or their Conversation, to decry the Chris-

lian Religion under the Name of *Superstition*; and this they are often known to do by appealing to *Tully*, *Horace*, and others concerning *Superstition*: For *these*, it seems, are their *Sacred* Writers in this Point.

Now, Sir, tho' you shall never hear me pleading for *Superstition*, yet let me freely ask you, is not the other Extream of *Prophaneness* and Irreligion as much to be avoided? If one be the Effect of Ignorance and Weakness of Mind, I hope you will allow the other to proceed from downright Perverseness and Want of Consideration: And let any one judge impartially which of them is most pernicious: It shall be granted you, if you please, that these Extreams do support one another, and the Partisans of both are Enemies to solid Religion, which is the true *Medium* betwixt them. The Cure of *Superstition* is sound Knowledge to discern the Nature of Things, their different Ends and Uses, and to give every thing it's Place; this is *considering*, and *shewing our selves Men*, as you know we are directed; and give me leave to be very positive, when I say, that such a serious Consideration of Things will make any one ashamed of Profanity and Irreligion, which is an Unconcernedness with the best Things, making no Difference at all, but laying equal Stress on the meanest Things as the greatest; which is the true Notion of *Superstition*.

I very well know what the profane Cant in this respect is, that runs thro' the whole Set of these Free-thinkers: But as you tender the Good of an immortal Soul, let me entreat you to forbear *sitting in the Seat of the Scornful*; I make no Question, but you are already acquainted with Books of this Nature, where such Cant abounds. I could refer you to one, who Talks after this modest Manner concerning Christians.

“ * Those superstitious Men (says he by way of Dirision) who make God Talk to all Mankind from Corners, and consequently require Things of Men under the Sanction of Misery in the next World, of which they are incapable of having any convincing Evidence that they came from him. They make him to have favourite Nations and People without any Consideration of Merit, and to put other Nations under Disadvantages without any Demerit. *W. 10*

Is not this, Sir, flat Opposition to Scripture? And yet is there not all the Evidence that can be desired, offered to the Consideration of these Gentlemen, proving that this Scripture is the Will of God revealed to Mankind? Will you then, Sir, without hearkening to such Evidence, deny those

* See the Pamphlet quoted above, p. 16.

authentick Revelations, which the Jewish and Christian Church have received? Why will you question what is so evident from this Scripture History, that God did speak to Mankind in some particular Places, which these Gentlemen call *Corners*, in Mockery, because their poor finite Capacities cannot comprehend the Methods and Proceedings of an infinite Being? *God did shew his Word unto Jacob, his Statutes and Judgments unto Israel: He hath not dealt so with any Nation, &c.* (But why must this be reflected on as absurd? Because the Conduct, it seems, does not please, neither is understood by rash, inconsiderate and Self-conceited Thinkers.

Shall we not call it Presumption? Most assuredly, Sir, it is so, to say unto God — What dost thou? What Insolency in poor Mortals, when they presume to prescribe Measures to the Almighty Sovereign of the World? Judge sincerely, Sir, within your own Breast about this Affair: Should not Men whose Understandings at present are very much confined, and pent up as it were; should not such, I say, be ashamed, when they take upon 'em to examine the Councils of infinite Wisdom, and to pass Verdicts and Censures upon them? Can such tell the World, they believe in God, and be angry at the Charge of Atheism, when

when they entertain such mean and false Notions of him; that cannot believe him *Righteous in all Ways, Holy in all his Works*? I wonder these Gentlemen don't quarrel with the Creation it self, and speak out blasphemously, as King *Alphonfus* did (who ought to have been sent a grazing, as another King before him was) that if they had been at the making of the World, they would have advised it better. Possibly, according to their refined Way of Reasoning, they may be displeased with the Sun's Rising in the *East*, and Setting in the *West*, and being confined betwixt the Tropicks. They can have no Opinion of the Creation, because vast Tracts of Land are cast into the Extremity of Cold, and are six Months without the Light of the Sun, which renders them altogether uninhabitable. It must be all a *Chance* in their Wisdom, because there are so many Deserts, desolate and barren Places, and that all Countries do not abound alike with Necessaries and Comforts.

Every thing that puzzles these Gentlemen, every thing which they cannot comprehend, must be exploded and laughed at. O wise and modest Thinkers! I hope you are not in that Number, or if you are, that you will not long continue so. Give me leave to remark a few Words farther, by
way

way of Advice, under this Head; They that are full of themselves, wise and prudent in their own Eyes, are not capable of discerning these divine *Dispensations*, which are thus insulted and turn'd into Ridicule; Whereas they that have reverend and suitable Thoughts of God, do perceive all of them worthy of God, as of our Praise and Admiration. It cannot be deny'd, but that God did only speak in old time to particular Persons, in particular Places: But 'twas not for the Benefit of those particular Persons *alone*, nor yet of those others in that particular *Corner* of the World, but of *all Mankind*; and therefore he wisely contrived it, *that the Sound went into the Earth, and the Words unto the End of the World*: So that all have had more or less Opportunity of hearing, and therefore are more or less guilty, for not knowing the holy Will of God. It is also true by Scripture, that the Son of God became Man, to *purchase unto himself a peculiar People*: And yet the Divine Goodness is not restrained, neither can God be charged with *Partiality*, seeing the Terms and Conditions of being Gods favourite and beloved People, are *offer'd to all*: And all Nations, and all in every Nation, may claim the Privilege, and also lay hold on it for their present and eternal Comfort.

You

You may wonder perhaps, Sir, I have not yet spoken more particularly upon that beloved Topick amongst Free-thinkers concerning *Priests* and their Conduct, which I have too often been an Ear-witness of in Coffee-houses, and otherways acquainted with from their Pamphlets. I shall now therefore beg leave to address my self to you more fully on this Head, because we are represented in the most odious Colours ; and if these Aspersions cannot be wiped off, I fear it may hinder your Enquiries after Truth, and the Christian Religion itself may suffer by the *artful* Diversions made by such Free-thinkers. I call them *artful* ; for, believe me, Sir, this is the grand Secret in the whole Affair ; 'tis this that best of all answers the Design of advancing Atheism and Irreligion, whilst the Ministers of true Religion are brought into as much Contempt as possible. As for my own Part, or any personal Interest or Credit, I can assure you with all the Sincerity imaginable, that such Reproaches and Reflections don't cause the least Uneasiness ; for they are no Surprise to me, nor ought to be to the rest of my Brethren ; we have been forewarned of them, and depend upon *Truth* itself, that they shall not hurt us.

It has been thus from the Beginning ; *he that was born after the Flesh, persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now.* Blessed are ye, says the Author and Finisher of our Faith, *when Men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of Evil against you falsely for my Sake : Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your Reward in Heaven ; for so persecuted they the Prophets which were before you.* The Sons of *Belial* mock'd the Prophets, and esteem'd 'em as *mad Fellows* ; the Apostles were held as the Off-scouring of all Things : And if so, why should it surprize us to be so often abus'd, seeing we are far short of their Gifts and Graces ?

But, Sir, 'tis the Honour and Wisdom of God I am now concern'd to speak for : despising his Priests, and vilifying their Office, is a Sin of a much deeper Dye, than the Generality of the World imagines : I need not remind you, how severely God has punish'd this Sin ; please at your Leisure to read *2 Chron. xxxvi. 16, 17.* This is a Sin moreover, that seems at this Time very catching ; the Humour of the present Age, 'tis to be observed in all Companies, runs very great Lengths this Way ; though I am perswaded there are great Numbers, who often make themselves and others Sport
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in abusing the Clergy, who have not as yet cast off all Sense of God and Religion; and therefore I hope the more easily reclaim'd in this Respect.

But you'll say perhaps, Sir, this is declaiming but not arguing; give me Leave then to offer you some Arguments, such as, I wish, may serve to convince you of the *Injustice* of these Reproaches, and of the *Falshood* of such sort of Reasoning concerning the Clergy. Whenever we are to be the *Butt*, as they call it, in Conversation, or the Subject of Derision in Pamphlets; you will bear me Witness, I dare say, that 'tis done under the Name of *Priests* in general, without any Distinction made betwixt true and false, good and bad, Christian and Heathen. If the Reason of this be ask'd, no less Authority than that of a Poet is assign'd by these Free-thinkers for making no such Distinction; *for Priests of all Religions are the same*. But are our Heads to be shaken by Poetry without Truth, and by Flights of Wit which have but little of good Sense in them? This was a Saying of a good Poet, 'tis true, but 'twas a Poet as Atheistical and Mercenary as ever wrote: 'Tis not said, he never spoke Truth, but certainly he never regarded it; he only minded what would please his Party, and make for them: But is this a just and fair

Way of arguing, amongst Gentlemen that make such strong Pretences to good Reasoning? Shall not the Clergy of the Christian Church be distinguished from Heathen Priests? And amongst the Clergy, shall it be reasonable to make the personal Faults of some, the Ground of a Libel against all?

There have been always, and still are, among the Christian Clergy, Persons eminent, as for outward Quality and Birth, so for Education and good Breeding, Learning and natural Parts, Virtue and Piety, and other commendable Endowments, as among any other Set of Men whatsoever. I appeal therefore to your own Judgment and Sense of Things, whether this alone does not make a Contempt of the *Order* in general very unreasonable, to say no worse of it? Shall a Gown or Habit lessen real Merit? Shall a Clergyman, having those good Qualities for which others, in other Stations, are deservedly esteem'd, be had in Contempt merely on Account of his *Order*? Or shall Human Infirmities, innocent Weaknesses, and little Humours be excusable in one sort of Men, but odious in another? Surely, Sir, this must not be call'd Reasoning, but Partiality and the strongest Prejudice, such as no modest Person can or ought to defend: And if Persons are to be despis'd
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for the *Order* and *Office* sake, which are of divine Institution, it may deserve the serious Consideration of those Gentlemen, whether they are not in effect despising God himself, insulting his Authority, and impeaching his Wisdom? and if so, these are Crimes confessedly that every one should be afraid of.

The Evangelical Ministry or Priesthood aims at a greater Good; be pleas'd to consider than, all other Orders and Offices whatsoever, and the Benefit of it, goes beyond this Life; whereas the Use and Benefit of all other are confin'd to it. This is the Means which the Wisdom of God has appointed for communicating and preserving the Knowledge of himself and his Will, for curing the Depravation of human Nature, as well as for conveying his Grace and Spirit, and for bringing Men to eternal Life: *For after that, says St. Paul, in the Wisdom of God, the World by Wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the Foolishness of Preaching, to save them that believe--He gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some Evangelists, and some Pastors and Teachers, for the perfecting the Saints, for the Work of the Ministry, for Edifying the Body of Christ, till we all come in the Unity of the Faith and Knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect*

fect Man, unto the Measure of the Stature of the Fulness of Christ, 1 Cor. i. 22. Eph. iv. 11. &c. You see then, Sir, the Custom of despising the Clergy, must by degrees introduce a Contempt of the *Ministry* itself, and also of all that is either propos'd or convey'd by it : So that they who as yet abhor Atheism and Irreligion, as I am very willing to believe is your Case, and dread either the falling into it themselves, or of being the Instrument of promoting it among others, ought to be very cautious of throwing Contempt upon the Clergy. I grant, the Clergy sometimes may happen to be really contemptible, yet still 'tis no matter for jesting, nor a fit Subject for Sport and profane Mirth. It is truly Matter of Mourning, and should alarm People, that both outward and spiritual Judgments are approaching. If they who should stand in the *Gap* are not able; if they who should intercede are most obnoxious, how deplorable must the Case of such a People be? In short, Sir, let Prejudices be laid aside, and let both the present State of the World be view'd impartially, and also the History of past Times duly consider'd, and 'twill appear that not only Piety and Virtue, but Knowledge, Sense and Learning keep Pace with the Clergy ; and give me leave to say, the
Priests

Priests or Clergy (call 'em as you please) are now, and always have been, the Standard for knowing whether these Things flourish'd or were in decay.

Consider then, dear Sir, that excellent Church you are a Member of: Take her according to her Constitution, and 'tis certain no Church so modest and reasonable: She makes no Pretences to Infallibility; she assumes no Sovereign Power; she sets up no Rabbies, nor has any private Man's Person in Admiration, as is done almost among all other Parties. Consider the Clergy also of this Church: Do they not generally, as it is required of them, treat their People as *Men*, who should see with their own Eyes, hear with their own Ears, and understand with their Hearts; whereas most others use their Followers as Children, or rather worse. And shall all this be requited with Contempt, Reproaches, and odious Characters, as if our Church was the worst, and our Clergy generally the vilest of any? I'll venture to say, no Clergy have less Encouragement from the People of their own Communion, nor any more virulently attack'd by Adversaries, especially the Enemies of all Religion. But why are we, Sir, so much more the Object of their Spite and Malice? The Reason is obvious, because we give them the greatest

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Resistance. They throw out the foulest Reproaches upon the Clergy, to obstruct the Efficacy of their Teaching, and to divert People from the Consideration of the Truth of the Christian Religion, and the Excellency of our Worship and Constitution, which if once receiv'd, would force Atheism and Irreligion to hide themselves: For such know by Experience, that raising Prejudices against Persons, will beget a Prejudice against all that is recommended by them, tho' never so good in itself.

I very well know, Variety of Sentiments amongst the Clergy, is often made an Objection in Favour of Free-thinking: But why is this a reasonable Ground of Prejudice? Is there less Variety of Opinions and Sentiments among all other Parties of Mankind? Do we think worse of Philosophy, History, Physick, or even the Mathematicks, because Philosophers, Historians, Physicians, and even Mathematicians are known to differ, and to have also their Debates? Must all these several Professions therefore be discarded? Such Persons, believe me Sir, have thought but very little to the Purpose, who take Offence at Mens different Opinions. Every one is born with a different Constitution and Temper, which produce different Passions and Inclinations; and these have a great Influence on the Understanding and
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Judgment. Different Education moreover, and the different Engagements which are early upon Men, make, no doubt, an Impression upon their Faculties, and give a Turn to different Thoughts; and I would observe by the bye, that nothing, perhaps, runs learned Men into different Opinions, so much as a fond Desire after new, uncommon and odd Things, that they be thought to have penetrated further than vulgar Souls. By this Means we easily account for so many different Sects, and that even the Followers of the same Sect, do in something or other differ from the Author of that Sect; so that the different Opinions among Divines, only shew them to be Men of like Passions and Infirmities with others; and perhaps differing more in Appearance than Reality, arising from *Words* and Terms, differently understood, it may be, according to the *Idioms* of a Language, &c. But surely, all this cannot be any reasonable Ground of Prejudice against the Christian Religion in general. Shall he be said to think wisely, who concludes from the different Opinions of Divines, that Religion is neither true nor certain, nor much to be regarded? Must the Knowledge of *Nature* and natural Things be laid aside, because Philosophers have different Opinions about these Matters? Or must History be neglected

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lected, because Historians differ about diverse Passages? Sin, in short, was the Cause why we are put under so many Difficulties in finding Truth; and God is pleas'd to permit so many different Opinions for trying the Sincerity and Strength of our Desire after the Knowledge of himself, as also to give us a better Taste of Truth, to make it dearer and more valuable: For Truth makes a deeper Impression on the Mind, and is better understood, when it is learned by Meditation, serious Enquiry, and full Examination: And for this Purpose, let me heartily recommend the Method that *Solomon* (whom some Gentlemen call a Free-Thinker) prescribes to us all----*If thou incline thine Ear unto Wisdom, and apply thy Heart to Understanding: Yea, if thou criest after Knowledge, and liftest up thy Voice for Understanding; if thou seekest for her as Silver, and searchest for her as for hid Treasures, then shalt thou understand the Fear of the Lord, and find the Knowledge of God.* [Prov. ii.]

I have heard some Free-thinkers, Sir, appealing to the *Bramins*, the *Persees*, *Bonzees*, &c. in Opposition to the Christian Religion. Such is the Extravagancy sometimes of a Free-thinker's Imagination, that rather than admit, or so much as examine the plain historical Evidence given for

for the Christian Religion, he will have recourse to the Pretensions made by these Sort of People to *Divine Scripture*: But does it appear to be any thing more than Pretence? Can you think, Sir, that *they* have as good Authority for those pretended Scriptures, as we for the Holy Bible? Have they, who wrote and deliver'd them, as good Credentials, as *Moses* and the Prophets, *Jesus Christ* and his Apostles? Has the Providence of God been as wonderfully seen in the Preservation of these Scriptures, as in that of *ours*? Are there such Divine and Humane Testimonies to the Truth of them? Are they as worthy of God? Do the Doctrine and Declarations in them, make equally for the Glory of God, and lay as good and solid Foundation for the Peace and Comfort of Men? I am very sure our *Bible* does this effectually: I pray God you may be sensible of it; and when you are so, and have a due Sense of the Truth and Excellency of our Holy *Scripture*, you will not, you cannot treat it so irreverently, as to rank it with a nonsensical *Alcoran*, as I have sometimes heard you do, without the least honourable Mark of Distinction.

If *Grotius's* little Treatise of the Truth of Religion, which I sometime ago recommended to your serious Perusal, shall not

give you full Satisfaction, as to the *Mahometan* Religion, you may claim my Promise, in enlarging upon that Point, when you please. I have the *Alcoran* now by me, translated from the *Arabick* by a faithful Interpreter and eminent Ambassador of *France* at *Constantinople*, the *Sieur du Ryer* ; and I have the best Authorities, antient and modern, for confirming what I shall say upon that Subject.

In the mean Time, let me observe, how deplorable it is in a Christian Country, that there should be such shrew'd Signs of gross Infidelity in the midst of so many *Means*, and while there is so much Opportunity for coming to the Knowledge of the Truth. I appeal, Sir, can any reasonable, impartial Free-thinker ask more for his Satisfaction in these important Matters? He that cannot see *Light* by the Help of the *Holy Scriptures*, I fear will be always incapable of perceiving *it*: For his Delusions must be strong, his Prejudices great, and consequently his Conviction must be extremely difficult. Some Free-thinkers, to my certain Knowledge, have taken a great deal of Pains in making Numbers of *Quotations* from the Writings of the *Christian Clergy*, for destroying that very Religion which the Clergy preach and defend. These Gentlemen, 'tis true, turn over a great many Books
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for this Purpose, to prove the Clergy guilty of a *Felo de se*, by shaking the Authority of that *Divine Book*, which they declare themselves and all others shall be judged by at the last Day. But what think you, Sir, is this Labour and Pains taken by these Free-thinkers, to better their own Minds, or to clear their Understanding? Or rather is it not too *plain*, that this Collection is made to increase the Prejudices of themselves and others against Truth and Religion, and to humour their Malice against the Clergy? I say too plain; for I will venture to affirm upon my own Knowledge at present, that the *Quotations* in general of this kind, are so far from being genuine and true, that on the contrary, they are neither fair nor faithful, being very often only distant *Words* and *Sentences* drawn together, and a malicious Turn given to them, for making them speak what the Authors never intended; sometimes *broken Passages* separate from *others*, which would not only have qualified them, but overturn'd the very Design of such sort of *Free-thinkers*; who consequently do more Prejudice to themselves by such *Quotations*, than to those from whom they take them. This is sometimes discovering Ignorance, and at other Times want of Candour and Honesty. But after all, good Sir, what
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Man is there, that has not his *Foibles*? Who expects Infallibility from Persons not inspired? Who is it, that reasons justly and exactly at all Times, and on all Subjects? How easily may an inconsiderate Thought, an improper Word, an indiscreet Expression slip in, when Men are haranguing, declaiming, or arguing in Passion, or by a heated Imagination? Men, that are not upon their Guard, may say many Things which possibly cannot endure the Test: But why must any thing weak or indiscreetly said, be perverted and wrested to a bad Sense and Purpose? However, I don't apologize in this Manner, you see, as if I thought all the Quotations of these Gentlemen were genuine and true, as I said before, or that they could not be otherwise justify'd: But to examine all these Quotations at present would be tedious, and I fear you will think I have run out my Letter to too great a Length already. I have observ'd it a general Practice amongst Free-thinkers, for many Years past, that when they are introducing our Divines, as Men that either give a *mean* or *odious* Character of our *Holy Books*, such as Bishop *Taylor* for Instance, who is often traduc'd this Way; or else as Men that have render'd the *Canon* of Scripture uncertain; such as Dr. *Grabe*, Dr. *Mills*, and Dr. *Beveridge*; 'tis observable, I say, that these

these Free-thinkers only take Notice of the Doubts and Difficulties which Men confess, but take no manner of Notice, or rather industriously conceal the Solutions given by these Divines of such Doubts and Difficulties; this I will make evident to you when ever you please: And will you say, that these Gentlemen do not impose on you, when 'tis so notorious, they make it their Business, not to teach Truth, or to quiet People's Minds, but to fill them with Scruples and Prejudices? Such Quotations against the Clergy, when fairly read and understood, will rather make for their Honour, than give any just Room for Objections: For it shews their Honesty, in that they do not conceal what is seemingly disadvantageous, and so there is no Reason to suspect their imposing upon People. Be pleas'd farther to consider in their Favour, that from the Account they give of the *Books* receiv'd into the *Canon of Scripture*, it appears how cautious and circumspect the *Primitive Church* was, how careful to distinguish the Writings of those who were *truly inspir'd* from others, that only pretended to Inspiration: So that they have delivered down to us, only what they themselves receiv'd, and were well assured, was from the Apostles: And indeed, no Book in the World, you may depend on it, Sir, was ever so well

well attested, neither can be prov'd so authentick as the Scripture: Nor has it only all the outward Testimonies that can be desired to recommend it, but the Doctrine and Contents moreover shew so much of the Wisdom of God, that it is impossible to have been written without the *Inspiration* of the blessed Spirit.

Let the Quintessence of all *Human Writings* be extracted, and 'twill be nothing, dear Sir, in Comparison of that which the Scripture teaches of God and Man, *Jesus Christ* and him crucify'd; and yet most of the Pen-men, it must be acknowledged, were without Learning or liberal Education. The Simplicity of Stile may appear to some to be barbarous; yet all who duly consider, will prefer it to the Eloquence of either *Demosthenes* or *Thucydides*; and a learned Divine of our own Nation has of late Years set this Matter in the clearest Light possible. The Apostles, indeed, when they preached the Gospel, did not use the *enticing Words of Man's Wisdom*, because they had no Design of catching Men by *Guile*, nor of drawing others after them with *the Excellency of Speech, or with the Wisdom of Words*: But suitably to their Character, they endeavour'd to make Converts only by a naked Representation of the Truth, and giving a plain Conviction

tion of it : Consider therefore this Matter seriously with yourself, Sir, and you will find, that the Stile, as well as the Matter of Scripture, must be by the *Inspiration* of God : For if the Pen-men of Scripture had been writing *cunningly devised Fables*, or what they wrote out of *their own Heads*, they would have written more like Men ; that is, as Men did then, and do still for the most Part, they would have minded chiefly the *pleasing Men* ; and so studied Art and Amusement, acceptable Words and fine Expressions ; what might tickle the Ear, affect the Fancy, humour the Passions, or which might strike in with their Opinions and Interest, which would have rendered the Truth less evident, or more liable to Exception.

I have heard some Free-thinkers talk a great deal about *various Readings* of the New Testament, and have thought they talk'd very much to the Purpose, when they made Objections to the *Clergy* on this Account ; whereas this only proves, that the *Clergy* may be Learned and Inquisitive, in producing such *various Readings* for these Gentlemen to comment upon : But surely they are no Proof that the *Clergy* intend to render the *Text of Scripture precarious*. Such a Charge against the *Clergy*, about *various Readings*, may amuse and

shake the Simple and Inconsiderate ; but it cannot surprize any wise reasoning Person : For what Wonder is it, that there should be different *Readings* of a *Book* that has been so often transcribed and translated into all the Languages of the World ? Let any one, after he has curiously compar'd our *Laws* and *Acts of Parliament*, in the *Records* of the *Tower*, with the several printed Editions of them, and with the Citation of Judges and Lawyers, tell the World, whether the *Variations* of them are not found to be very many, nay some of them *essential* too, which is more surprizing. But let the *various Readings* of the New Testament be as many as any Free-thinker is pleas'd to suppose, I can affirm, upon my own Knowledge, Sir, that there are very few *material*, and that none of them destroy any *Matter of Fact*, on which the Truth of the *Christian Religion* is founded ; neither do they alter any *essential* Point of Doctrine : And if this be the Case, I hope what I say will have its due Weight with you. I only add, that admitting all particular *Variations*, the Whole of our Religion stands firm ; because what may be dubious in one Place, is clearly proved in another ; and these *various Readings*, when well consider'd, rather afford an Argument for fixing and clearing the *Scripture*, than for rendering

rendering it precarious: For by *them* we see the *Tradition* of the *Scripture*; by *them* it appears, that the Books of the New Testament are no *Forgery*; and that in all essential Parts, whether Historical or Doctrinal, they are still uncorrupted. The learned Free-thinkers would do well to peruse the Preface of an accurate Critick (*Ludolphus Kusterus*) who publish'd Dr. *Mills's* New Testament in *Amsterdam*, with these *various Readings*, that are so much objected to. Let me trouble you with one Passage out of that Preface in the same Language 'tis written in, and at your Leisure please to let me know your Opinion of it.

Quid auctoritatem Textus sacri magis confirmare queat quam mirificus tot Codicum MSS Versionum, patrum, aliorumq; Scriptorum veterum consensus; qui (quod ad ipsum Textum adtinet) leviter tantum & exiguoadmodum discrimine inter se discrepent? sane, ut dicam quod res est, ex praestantissima hac Novi Testamenti Editione Milliana, vel hic precipue fructus in Ecclesiam redundat, quod nunc demum scire liceat, plerasq; tot Codicum MSS. Lectiones variantes ita comparatas esse, ut parum vel nihil inter eas intersit. Sane, si leviora illa a reliquis separaveris, mirum quam exiguus harum relinquetur numerus, quæ videntur alicujus esse momenti, & erudito

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pioq;

pioq; Lectori dubitandi Materiam præbere possint, utra Lectio alteri præstat. Omnibus nunc apparere potest, discrepantiam Codicum MSS. Novi Testamenti longe minoris esse momenti, quàm non solum Homines erga S. Scripturam male animati ante jactaverant, sed etiam multi forsàn ex iis, qui bene de Religione sentirent, sibi persuaserant.

There is one Objection, which I think I have heard you more than once make, as a Free-thinker, and you seem to lay a great Stress upon it ; which is concerning the present *Translation* of the Bible : The Priests, you are told, *use pious Frauds in translating*---What shall we say to this ? 'Tis an Attack made on purpose to lessen the Credit of the *Bible* ; and they well know, who tell you this, that if they can but lessen the Credit of that *Book* with you, they shall soon gain another Point, which is, that you will lay aside all Thoughts of reading it ; and by this Means the People in general, they hope, will be without the Benefit of a *Book* that gives so much Disturbance to a Free-thinker ; the Generality, say they, are incapable of consulting the original Languages ; let our Attack therefore but gain Credit, and who'll trust any longer to that musty Book, though it be the oldest Book in the World ? Now, Sir, give
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me leave to observe, as to our present *Translation of the Bible*, that we do not pretend this Translation was made and carried on, as *that* by the *Seventy* Greek Interpreters is said to have been; which would give an equal Authority with the Original: Nor do we say our Translators were immediately inspir'd. We own them to have been Men liable to Mistakes, and consequently this Work of theirs, like all human Works, is, no doubt, capable of being amended in diverse Places: But I hope, Sir, you will not deny, that they were good and serious Men: 'Tis very certain they were so; and their Abilities were as well known for undertaking such a Work; and, I persuade myself, you will not think it unreasonable, when I say further, that these Men had that Divine Assistance which is promised to all Christians, and may in a greater Degree be expected by such, who set about any good Enterprize for the Glory of God, and the Good of his Church, as the Case was here. It may then, and is truly affirmed, that these Translators have committed no essential Mistakes: Nay, take it altogether, the *marginal Readings* and the *Text*; the Translation may be justly defended as equal to, if not better than, any *Modern* or *Ancient* one.

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Could you but prevail with yourself; good Sir, to be *Priest-ridden* for one Quarter of an Hour, whilst I entreat you to read over the Preface of these Translators, which you often see plac'd before this Translation of the Bible, you would then be fully convinc'd what Diligence, what Care and Faithfulness was us'd by those Men.

This Preface ought always to be printed with the Bible itself, but 'tis too often otherwise; and thereby the Hearts of many that read the Bible, are depriv'd of that comfortable Assurance, which otherwise the Preface would give 'em; this we can only lament; but let the Governors of our Church answer for this Omission in Printers and Booksellers, only for saving a little Paper.

I have heard you sometimes make *particular* Exceptions against our present Translation; that there are some Words, both in the *Hebrew* and *Greek* Originals, that are not taken Notice of by our Translators; and on the other Hand, that our Translators have inserted Words in their Translation, when there is nothing to answer those Words in the Original; and yet material Words too, you say. The Satisfaction I would gladly give you, as to these Particulars, cannot now well be done, because I have Reason to think my Letter appears too long already; but if you are pleas'd to
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let me know the Particulars, I don't doubt but another Letter may clear up the seeming Difficulties to your Satisfaction.

I don't blame you, Sir, nor can any reasonable Objection be made against *such sort* of Free-thinking as this ; when nothing more is meant by it, than a serious sober Enquiry into the Nature and Reasons of such Matters as are propos'd. But surely there are many, and great Objections against the common Notion and Practice of *Free-thinking*, such as you seem to be too fond of at present : However, I hope in a little Time we shall both be *Free-thinkers* alike.

One Thing I request of you, that you will not suffer yourself to be laugh'd out of your Reason and Religion, under the Notion of being *Priest-ridden* ; nor imagine, that a Clergyman's Conversation can be any Clog or Hinderance to *Free-thinking*. They are really the *Riders*, who are Enemies to Reason : But how can the Clergy be Enemies to Reason, when they are constantly preaching *it* up ? Don't humour then the *Lay-cant* of some (who, in reality, and upon Reflection you will find, are more given to *ride* than the Clergy are) when they wittily assure you, that Priests would fain be rely'd on as Lawyers, Physicians, &c. are in their several Faculties ; but 'tis much the better to have all *three*, they say, excluded

cluded any Country; and when that's done, the Country, if you'll believe 'em, will be a real Paradise. Have a care how you oppose Divine Authority: I am very sure, 'tis demonstrable, that God has established the Evangelical Priesthood or Ministry to continue for ever in the Church; that is, to the End of the World: Divine Wisdom has chosen this, as the most effectual Method and Means for propagating and preserving the Knowledge of the Truth. Before the Law, God requir'd Fathers and Masters of Families to do this Office, and to teach their Children, Servants, and others under their Care (see *Gen. xviii. 19.*) By *Moses*, he separated the Tribe of *Levi* for this End, and ordained, *that the Priests Lips should keep Knowledge, and that the People should seek the Law at his Mouth, because he is the Messenger of the Lord of Hosts*, (see *Mal. xi. 7.*) *Jesus Christ* following this Conduct of Divine Wisdom, ordain'd Apostles and other Ministers to be *Stewards of the Mysteries of God*, and to be the Means of conveying the Heavenly Treasures of saving Knowledge: And they also ordain'd Elders or Presbyters, which are all one with Priests; the very People you so often hear ironically mention'd. And because the Gospel was to continue till the End of the World, therefore the same Method

thod is continued to this Day, and will be kept up by all who regard God or right Reason. But though the Clergy are your Ministers, Sir, for conveying this saving Knowledge, yet they are not ordain'd to save the People from the Trouble of Thinking, but only to help them to think right, and also to keep them in mind of those necessary Truths which they have learned.

I do not question, Sir, but that the *Lai-ty* are every Way as capable to find out Truth as the Clergy: But their Business and Employments may not allow them Time. What then more agreeable to Divine Wisdom, than that there should be a *Set* of Men, whose particular Business it is to prepare what all should believe and observe? But why must the Clergy, who are thus commission'd, be said *to lead Men into Opinions, which they have list'd themselves to profess, and for the most part into mistaken Opinions*, as I have sometimes observed it maliciously objected? Is it not the Duty and Interest of Divines, to lead Men into true Opinions? and why may not the Opinions be true, though the Priests profess them? Is there no *Sincerity* in Profession, think you, Sir? Must all be suspected that are under any solemn Engagements? I know you must, after serious Reflection, think this unreasonable, as well as

H uncharitable.

uncharitable. 'Tis granted, there are many *mistaken Opinions*: But this is only a Reason for a fair impartial Examination; but can be no Reason for refusing to hear all and every one without Exception; nor ought there to be a greater Prejudice against one who has *listed himself* (as 'tis call'd by way of Derision) to profess only particular Opinions, than against another who has not yet declar'd himself what Church or Party he belongs to: For the Truth may be as little with this last, as the other. If you and I, Sir, can agree so far as to believe St. *Paul*, 'tis then agreed, that the Church is the *Pillar and Ground of Truth*; and the Consequence of that is, that she ought to oblige all Members to profess and teach *sound Doctrine*; and hence you see the Reasons for *Creeds, Confession, and Articles of Faith* (which are such Grievances to Free-thinkers): For without them it is hardly possible to preserve the Unity and Purity of Faith. You know very well, in the Days of the Apostles there was a *Form of sound Words*, which St. *Paul* commanded *Timothy* to *hold fast*; to teach according to it, and to take care that those he ordain'd should do the same. We are forewarn'd, you know, of the coming in of *Heresies* and *damnable Doctrines*; and therefore there must be a *Test* for trying whether

whether Men speak right and according to Truth. Certainly no Care is too great for preserving the Truth, and for preventing false Doctrine; and yet neither of these can be done if private Persons have Liberty to advance whatever they please, and to broach all the wild Notions that shall come into their Heads.

There is one Notion that I have often perceiv'd you are fond of, and you must excuse me if I take some Notice of it, because I am satisfy'd, 'tis derived from *Free-thinking*, in the Sense I have been taking it thro' the whole Letter. I mean, that the *Clergy are burthensome, and that the supporting them is a National Charge*; your Complaint, I own, has, in this respect, been gentle and gentile in my Hearing: But if the Language of your Heart may be guessed at, something more is imply'd, *viz.* that the Clergy are a *great Evil to Society*. If this be a settled Notion with you---to what Purpose shall I argue from the *Command* and *Institution* of God himself in this Matter? Or from what St. *Paul* has declar'd concerning it, 1 *Cor.* ix? But should the Case be thus with you (as I hope 'tis not) and no Regard to be had to the Divine Institution of the Ministry, nor any Sense of the spiritual Good to be got by it, give me leave to argue with you another Way, by

observing that there can be no Reason (if the Matter be fairly and impartially considered) to complain of the Charge of maintaining the Clergy of this Kingdom, or to account it any Evil or Burden to the Nation: For, in the first Place, do they not pay proportionably to all publick Taxes? Sometimes, I believe, more; because commonly they are taxed very near, if not altogether (as 'tis my own Case, I do assure you) according to the real Value of their Livings. I would take Notice in the next Place, that the Tithes, out of which the Clergy are maintained, belong to none other; and the Clergy were in Possession of them *before* any present Proprietor, or his Predecessors, had any *Right* to the Lands themselves. I would farther observe to you, that in any Lands which you, or your Ancestors, may have purchased, the Tithes were *not paid for*; they are deducted; and consequently paying them to the Clergy, is only paying to Men what is due; and just as reasonable as for your Tenant to pay the Rent of his Farm. But farther yet, Sir, the Clergy's Revenues are not Hereditary to their private Families, as under the *Mosaical* Dispensation; and therefore less Cause still for any Sir G-----t H-----te whatever to grudge or envy what the Clergy enjoy: Every Rank, from the highest to the lowest, have the
Privi-

Privilege of training up their Children for these Offices, and the Revenue belonging to them. The Clergy then are not a Burden, nor an Evil to the Nation, but rather a *Temporal* Advantage. However, I could wish, and even yet hope, that their being a *Spiritual* Advantage, may be the most prevailing Argument with my Friend; and that the former Part of my Letter will have some Weight towards making it so.

There is one Point yet, which is frequently the Subject in *Free-thinking* Conversation, and which you may expect should be spoken to; indeed it makes a great Noise at this Time of Day, and 'tis the artful Engine that's play'd off at present to destroy the Christian Religion—I mean the insisting so much upon *Moral Duties* in Opposition to the *Mysteries* of Religion and *Matters* of Faith, which these Gentlemen are pleas'd to call vain *Speculations*, *Impositions*—and what not. Nay, that the Peace and Order of Human Society is destroy'd, when a Zeal is shew'd for such *Speculations*, &c. Now, after what has been said already, I am willing to believe, you do not expect I should spend any Time to convince you, that there are *Matters of Faith*, and that such are not vain *Speculations*, *Impositions*, &c. I rather hope we are agreed, that such Matters are necessary to Salvation; and if necessary,

fary, how should they be superseded by *moral* Duties? What if it be granted, that *moral* Duties are sufficient to support Human Societies, and to secure the Peace of them; shall a *Christian* say, that a quiet and peaceable Life here, is all that one should aim at? St. *Paul* says, *without Faith it is impossible to please God*; and a greater than he has said, that *he who believes not is damn'd*. He that believes this, cannot think *Matters of Faith*, to be Matters of no Moment, or altogether unnecessary; and therefore he that pleads for *Morality* without *Faith*, must in effect be an Atheist and Infidel; he believes not the Gospel, neither fears eternal Damnation, which can only be prevented by a true humble Faith, which worketh by Love, and keeps the Commandments. These Gentlemen that make such a stir about *Morality*, don't consider that 'tis a Part of Christianity; nor was there ever such a perfect System of Morality thought of by any Philosopher, as that which the Gospel teaches; and I will readily agree with these Gentlemen, if they please, that such Persons have but little Sense of the Christian Religion, who are regardless of Morality, and neither preach nor press it: But then the Christian Religion should be proposed entire, and not mangled; and so Faith, and the Things to be believed, should be

be preached too, otherwise there is more Regard to Man than God, and more Concernment for the present Life, than for that Life and Immortality which the Gospel has brought to Light: Therefore, believe me, Sir, those Gentlemen argue very inconsiderately, who imagine that the Peace and Order of Human Society depend wholly, or mostly, on the Practice of *Moral* Duties: For as these are the Blessings of God, the Effect of his Providence, and the Testimonies of his Favour; so that Nation or People may be most assur'd of them, who *receive the Word of God and keep it*. Do but reflect, Sir, seriously upon the Mysteries of the Christian Religion, and then tell me, whether such Matters of Faith do any ways destroy the Practice of Morality, as is objected by these Free-thinkers? You will find, that the Mysteries of the Christian Religion are truly the Mysteries of Godliness, the surest Foundation of both Piety and all moral Duties; nor is it possible to invent more forcible Arguments for persuading to the Practice of them. Can there be a greater Motive to Love, to Forgiveness, to the doing all manner of Good to others, than the stupendous Love of God to Mankind in sending his Son? Can any behold *Christ* dying for us, and not feel the powerful Constraint to die to Sin, and to follow
 Righte-

Righteousness? Will not the Prospect of eternal Life best serve to wean Mens Hearts from the inordinate Love of this World, which puts them upon many wicked Practices? And will not the Contemplation of the many great and precious Promises of God by *Christ*, excite a sincere Desire to cleanse one's self from all Filthiness of the Flesh and Spirit, and to perfect Holiness in the Fear of God? Shall the pressing these Things destroy the Practice of Morality, or cool any ones Zeal for it? No Topicks from Heathen Moralists have half the Force. This Error of decrying *Faith*, and of advancing *Morality*, to the Prejudice of it, has been obtaining gradually in this Nation for many Years past: It has been favoured and carried on by Men of different Principles, and who had different Designs in their Heads. Some good well-meaning Persons have been also deceived with the false Varnish spread over it: Such are the *secret Devices of Satan*, which every sincere Christian should guard against; particularly such a fatal Error as this, which tends effectually to weaken the Kingdom of *Jesus Christ*, which is built upon *Faith*, neither can continue with us, unless Faith be preserv'd. In short, Sir, *Morality* is to be taught, but not to the Prejudice of *Faith*: These two should always be join'd together, nor indeed
 can

can they be put asunder : For 'tis a false Faith which is without Morality, and there is no true or *acceptable Morality*, which has not Faith for its Principle. Let the World be never so much offended, *Christ crucified* must be preached, and all the other Mysteries of the Gospel, how little soever such Free-thinkers may like them. The Scriptures tell us of *damnable Doctrines*; which makes it the Duty of every faithful Minister to *declare all the Counsel of God*, by endeavouring to settle Peoples Minds, that they may not be *like Children tossed to and fro with every Wind of Doctrine*; nor drawn by the Slight and Craftiness of Deceivers, into an *Indifferency* about all Religions: And I beg you would believe me, Sir, when I say, that *this* is what the Free-thinkers, you have too long convers'd with, are driving at: May God direct you to make a sure and speedy Retreat; and whenever it shall please him to touch your Conscience, and to open your Eyes, that you may see your present Errors, I may venture to assure you, you will then rejoice to find that *Saying faithful and true*, as it is certainly *worthy of all Acceptation*, That *Jesus Christ came into the World to save Sinners, even the chief*; and that *thro' him Forgiveness of Sin is preach'd to every one*; as that *by him all that believe are justified from all Things,*

from which they could not be justified even by the Law of Moses. This Doctrine is comfortable, as well as true ; and none will despise it but *Solomon's Fools*, who *make a Mock at Sin*; but *the Righteous*, says he, *bath Hope in his Death*, Prov. xiv. 32. *Hope* does not look backwards, but must have a Respect to something that is to come, and therefore is built upon the Faith of Immortality and eternal Life. Thus the Patriarchs of old, the Prophets, and other great Men of the *Jews*, lived in the Faith and Hope of a *better Country* than any upon Earth, *Heb. xi.* To which happy Country God of his infinite Mercy bring us all in his due time.

I am, S I R,

Your faithful Servant

in all Christian Offices, &c.



P O S T-

POSTSCRIPT.

THE *Notions* which Dr. *Clark*, late Rector of St. *James's*, some Years ago vented amongst us, as agreeable (in his Opinion) with the *Scripture Doctrine* of the *Trinity*, and as being the Sense of the ancient *Writers* of the Christian Church, were soon after justly censur'd to be *Heretical* by an *English* Synod, as they had been many Years before by a *General Council*, and are accordingly at this Day adjudg'd to be *such* by the *Statute Law* of this Realm.

The *Fratres Poloni* appear to have been Dr. *Clark's* favourite Commentators in that Work of his, call'd the *Scripture Doctrine* of the *Trinity*: And whoever will take the Pains of perusing the *Latin* Comments of that *Fraternity* (as I have done several Years ago) and compare 'em with the Doctor's *Expositions* of Scripture in that Book, will find the *Rector* frequently copying so very close after those *Gentlemen*, that he can be said to be little more than a bare *Translator*;

and yet he refuses to be rank'd in the Number of those Writers who were profess'd *Socinians*.

This transferring of *Heterodoxy* from Abroad, is a Practice that has too much prevail'd in our Nation for near these *forty* Years, as by my own private Observation; the fatal Consequences have been *gradual*, as well as mischievous, in Matters of Religion; and 'tis worth our remarking at this time of Day, that though an *English* Reader shall be justly surpriz'd at the many impious Books and Pamphlets publish'd almost every Week against God and Religion; yet an honest *Foreigner* is not surpriz'd at all, and only pities the *English* Readers, who, for want of knowing the *Latin* Tongue, cannot see how grossly they are impos'd on by new vamp'd *Translations* from Abroad.

'Tis in this Manner that so much *Heretical* Ware has been imported amongst us, without any Duty laid, or any pecuniary *Mulct* inflicted, which yet might have turn'd to Account more Ways than one, if our Superiors had thought fit. It may be truly said in our Favour, that, by reason of our Climate and Constitution, we are not so good at *Invention*; but 'tis very evident, in respect of *Improvement* in this, as well as other Matters, we don't fall short of any People in the World: And this 'tis that has

has made the *Anti-trinitarians* abroad so very free, for above these *thirty* Years past, in claiming *our* Church to their Party. What *Grounds* they have had for such Pretences, shall not be particularly enquir'd into at present : This I can safely aver, that the avow'd Doctrines and Principles of our Church could afford them *none* ; and if so, whence could they have *any*, unless from the Encouragement they found in a secret Correspondence with some of the *Members* of our own *Church*, who then, and some of them lately have, made a very considerable Figure in it? Many yet remember, no doubt, the *Letters* that appeared amongst us about that time of Day relating to these Matters ; particularly the Account which a notable *Socinian* * there gives us of the Reasons for his embracing the *Romish* Religion. These *Letters* did startle many considering Men amongst us, and made them doubt, there is somewhat more in the Boasts of that Sort of Men than yet appear'd above-board. These *Letters* occasion'd an honest Divine in *Holland* † to express himself in the following Manner, concerning them and us ; “ On this “ Score, *says he*, I shall add, that the Church

* Mr. Papin.

† Jurien *Tableau du Socinianisme*, Part 1. 5. Lettre, p. 211.

“ of *England*, which is the most illustrious
 “ Part of our Reformation, owes us some-
 “ thing for our Edification : God forbid
 “ we should give any Credit to the Accusa-
 “ tions made on that Account against her :
 “ But in Consideration of the Confidence
 “ wherewith the Pleaders for an *universal*
 “ *unlimited Toleration* on this Side the Wa-
 “ ter, accuse *her* for being *in their Opinions*,
 “ I must take the Boldness to say, *she* ought
 “ not to refuse a publick, and in some sort
 “ solemn Disavowal of them, to refute
 “ those Calumnies.” Much about the same
 Time that we were thus called upon from
 Abroad, the Synod of the *Walloon* Churches
 of the United Provinces assembled at *Am-*
sterdam ; when they were inform’d, as well
 by Memorials and Instructions of their own
 Churches, as by a Letter from between
thirty and *forty* of the *French* Ministers
 here at *London*, that several of their Com-
 munion did both *there* and *here* teach the
Socinian Heresies ; some of them openly,
 whilst others more artificially hid their Poi-
 son under the Cover of an *unbounded Tole-*
ration. This Synod thought it necessary,
 solemnly and unanimously to condemn se-
 veral Propositions of that Nature and Ten-
 dency, as *false*, *scandalous* and *perni-*
cious, forbidding, under the highest Cen-
 sures,

fures, &c. * and certainly every true Son of the Church of *England* did then, and will still honour the *Synod*, upon account of its laudable Zeal for the *Faith*, for which we are bid to contend.

Our Danger, in regard to *false Doctrines*, is too visibly encreased since that Time. The Conspiracy seems to be universal, and therefore the more formidable. The different Denominations of *Deist* and *Socinian*, *Arian*, *Semi-Arian*, *Photinian*, and the like, are well-nigh lost amongst us under the boasted Title of *Free-thinkers*. This is the *Seet* that has been battering the Walls of our *Sion* for so many Years past under different Shapes; their Advances have been *gradual*; but the several *Free-thinking* Battalions (thus united) of *Heresy* and *Blasphemy*, *Infidelity* and *Profaneness*, have carried the Attack so far, that, 'tis justly fear'd, there is now no *Order*, *Degree*, nor *Place* among us, wholly free from the *Infection*. But may we not live in Hopes, that the Piety and Zeal of a *Metropolitan*, will, e're long, apply the proper Remedy, which is a *Convocation*? It seems necessary (I speak it with all due Deference) not only for the sake of the Faith and Doctrine of our *English*

* *Extrait des Articles resolu en Synod de l' Eglises Wallones*
&c. Lettre 8. p. 559, 565. *Tableau du Socinianisme.*

Church, but even to preserve the Belief of any Revelation ; surely a speedy *Declaration* must be made, that there is a *Religion enjoyn'd by Heaven* ; otherwise we have reason to expect, that the next Age will believe *none*.

But what if this boasted *Sect* of *Free-thinkers* should be permitted by Heaven to lay level with the Ground this *Holy City* of ours ; may we not ask what they would build up in the Room of it ? I much fear 'tis the *Superstition* and *Trumpery* of the Church of *Rome* that they would introduce amongst us, hoping by that Means to decry the Christian Religion in general. Tho' these Gentlemen do not care to speak out, (such as the Author of *Christianity as old as the Creation*) yet I am inclin'd for my own Part to think *thus* upon the Matter ; not only because that notable *Socinian* * already mention'd, turn'd *Roman Catholick*, but also that another (yet in Disguise) a few Weeks ago, attack'd, in a virulent Manner (by many *false Quotations*) an eminent *Divine* of our own Church, and at the same Time disclaim'd, or sneer'd rather, at all Pretences to the *Sufficiency of Human Reason in Matters of Religion* : Which perhaps

* Mr. Papin

was the discovering *Secret* too openly ; however the Cause and Effect are both plain.*

'Tis not the Design of this *Postscript* to give a Detail of the *false Doctrines* contain'd in Dr. *Clark's Scripture Doctrine* of the *Trinity*, but rather to shew the great *Insincerity* of the Man in defending *them*. It was an *old Heresy* reviv'd, and, in truth, requires nothing but the *old Answer* to be given to it again. When the Doctor was call'd upon by the two Houses of *Convocation*, he shewed the like *Insincerity* in his *Recantation*, as he had done before in the Way of *broaching* his *Heresy* ; otherwise the *Lower House* would not have rejected it, as they did, and as is yet to be seen in their *Journals*. The *Rector's Subterfuge* was not long to be conceal'd from such a Body of Men, and the World was soon convinc'd by *their* Proceedings, that the Doctor was too strongly attach'd to his *Heterodox* Opinions, to make any *full* and *explicit*, any *heartly* and *sincere* Recantation of them.

I know very well, through the Iniquity of the Times, there have been many Difficulties since started, as to our determining

* See a Letter to Dr. *Waterland*, concerning his Vindication of Texts of Scripture, in Answer to a Book entitl'd, Christianity as old as the Creation.

what shall now be deem'd *Heresy* in this Nation: But surely those two *Statutes*, 1 *Eliz. c. 1.* and 29 *Car. 2. c. 5.* especially if we pay due Regard to the Judgment of Sir *Edward Coke* on the former, should be sufficient for ascertaining this Matter, *viz.* what is *Heresy* since the Time of the *Reformation*. That great Lawyer tells us, in express Words, * That this Statute of 1 *Eliz.* was made to limit what Opinions should be judg'd *Heresy*, in Opposition to the *Popish* Notions that had before prevail'd about *Heresy*: And in the *Statute* itself 'tis declar'd, " That nothing shall be adjudg'd to be *Heresy*, but what has heretofore been adjudg'd or determin'd to be so, by the Canonical Scriptures, or by the first four General Councils, or any of them; or by any other General Council, wherein the same was declar'd *Heresy* by the express and plain Words of the said Canonical Scriptures, or such as hereafter shall be order'd, judg'd, or determin'd to be *Heresy* by the High Court of Parliament of this Realm, with the Assent of the Clergy in Convocation." Sir *Edward Coke* farther observes upon this *Statute*, that although the *Proviso* (there mention'd) ex-

* *Inst. 3. c. 5.*

tends only to the High Commissioners, (which Part is now repeal'd) yet seeing in the High Commission there be so many Bishops, and other Divines, and learned Men, it may serve for a good Direction to others, especially to the Diocesan, being a sole Judge in so weighty a Cause. What if the Punishment of *Heresy* be alter'd? Will any one say that Sir *Edward Coke's* Argument about it, is not certainly good, or that it can never alter? *The Reason* (says he) wherefore *Heresy* is so extremely and fearfully punish'd is, for that *gravius est Æternam quam Temporalem lædere Majestatem.* — *Hæresis est Lepra Animæ* — As he that is a Leper of his Body, is to be removed from the Society of Men, lest he should infect them, by the King's Writ, *De Leproso amovendo*: So he that has *Lepram Animæ* (says he) that is, to be convicted of *Heresy*, shall be cut off, lest he should poison others, by the King's Writ, *De Hæretico comburendo.* The Statute of 29 Car. 2. c. 9. which takes away that Writ, has provided, notwithstanding, in these express Words, “ Nothing in this Act shall extend, “ or be construed to take away, or abridge the “ Jurisdiction of Protestant Archbishops or “ Bishops, or any other Judges of any Ecclesiastical Courts, in Cases of *Atheism*, “ *Blasphemy*, *Heresy* or *Schism*, and other “ damnable

“ damnable Doctrines and Opinions, but
 “ they may proceed to punish the same ac-
 “ cording to his Majesty’s Ecclesiastical
 “ Laws, by Excommunication, Deprivation,
 “ Degradation, and other Ecclesiastical Cen-
 “ sures, not extending to Death, in such
 “ sort, and no other, as they might have
 “ done before the making of this Act.” It
 seems to me very plain from these two *Sta-*
tutes, both what *Heresy* is, and what is the
 Punishment *now* to be inflicted; and those
 that think otherwise, do unawares, in my
 Opinion, reflect on the Piety and Wisdom
 of our *Legislature*, as if they had been de-
 ficient, or not as careful in providing against
 the *Lepra Animæ*, as they had been sollici-
 tous in repealing the Act *de Heretico com-*
burendo.

I am very sensible that such an Account
 of *Heresy* from our *Statute* Law is far from
 being agreeable with the Sentiments of our
Free-thinkers; and that their *Rabby Hobbes’s*
 Definition of *Heresy* pleases them much bet-
 ter; and yet they don’t act consistently
 with such Definition neither: “ *Heresy*
 “ (says Mr. *Hobbes*) is nothing else, but a
 “ private Opinion obstinately maintained,
 “ contrary to the Opinion which the *pub-*
 “ *lick Person*, that is to say, the Represen-
 “ tant of the Commonwealth, has com-
 “ manded to be taught: By which it is
 “ manifest

“ manifest (says he) that an *Opinion* pub-
 “ lickly appointed to be taught, cannot be
 “ *Heresy* ; nor the Sovereign Princes, that
 “ authorize them, *Hereticks* : For *Here-*
 “ *ticks* are none but *private* Men, that
 “ *stubbornly* defend some *Doctrine* prohi-
 “ bited by their lawful Sovereigns. This
 is Mr. *Hobbes*’s Definition of, and this his
 Comment upon *Heresy* *. Now mark the
 present Behaviour of our *T---n---s*, our
W---t---ns, and *W---ls---ns* in Regard
 to what their great Master *Hobbes* prescribes
 in the Matter of *Heresy* ? They have all
 their several Opinions ; they are all *private*
 Men ; they all profess *Allegiance* to their
 Sovereign ; and yet stubbornly defend their
private Opinions that are prohibited by
 their Sovereign : So that they stand charg’d
 with *Heresy*, whether the *Statute* Law,
 or the Doctrine of Mr. *Hobbes* himself, be
 admitted as a *Rule* in this Matter.

But, as I have hinted already, ’tis nei-
 ther the Nature of *Heresy* in general, nor
 of *that* in particular, which Dr. *Clark* was
 censur’d for, that is now propos’d to be en-
 quir’d into : The main Design of this Post-
 script, after what has been remarked on the
gradual Advances made in the *Free-think-*

* See his *Leviathan*, p. 317, 318.

ing Way, is to shew the notorious *Insincerity* of Dr. Clark, in wilfully corrupting the *Fathers* of the Christian Church, making them the *Patrons* of that *Heresy* which he had reviv'd, and some of them to *justify* what they themselves are professedly *writing against*.

This must be allowed to be a most grievous *Innovation* in Matters of the greatest *Importance* ; and will be fatal in its Effects, if not *guarded* against : For shall there be such an avow'd *Difference in fundamental Doctrines*, as the late Rector of St. James's has made it in his Book already nam'd, and must it not occasion a Breach of *Church Communion* ? Shall the World be told in that Book, that *his* Doctrine is the Doctrine of the Church of *England*, the same that those *Primitive Writers* taught, who are quoted by him ; and shall not Candidates for *Holy Orders* be in the utmost Danger of being unwarily seduced to make false *Subscriptions*, and instead of adhering to the *ancient Catholick Doctrine*, to defend those very *Innovations* which the *Doctor* has introduc'd ? Is not the *Liturgy* hereby abus'd in the grossest Manner, and *Christians* in *general* necessarily *distracted*, how they are to perform their *Devotions* ; with what Restrictions they are to *Worship* and *Honour* the blessed *Trinity*, and in what Sense they are to say *Amen* to

to the several *Intercessions*, *Thanksgivings*, and *Doxologies*? If so, the greatest *Offence* imaginable must consequently be given to those pious Souls, that frequent the daily Service of our Church; and indeed Dr. *Clark's Insincerity* has shewn it too plainly to have been his *Design*, to betray our *Church* and its *Doctrines* into the Hands of such, who have been long waiting to exterminate *Christianity* itself.

Had the *Doctor* appeal'd *only* to the *Holy Scriptures* in Defence of those *Notions* which he advanced, no great Danger would have been apprehended, and the *Falsity* of them would soon have appear'd: for the *Texts* of *Scriptures* relating to the *Trinity*, he very well knew, had been carefully compared, fully explain'd, and substantially vindicated from the Exceptions of every *Heretick* long before his Time. Another Method therefore was to be taken, in telling the *English* Reader, that we had *mistaken* the Sense of such *Texts*, by varying from the *Testimonies* of the most eminent *Writers* of the Christian Church; and such *Testimonies* he lays before his Reader.

There is one remarkable *Text*, as to the Sense of which the *Doctor* has knowingly and wilfully endeavour'd to seduce his Reader, by his *false Quotations* from two very eminent Lights of the Christian Church:

The

The Text is, * *I and my Father are one*; the two Primitive Writers *quoted* by him, to serve his Purpose, are St. *Chrysostome* and St. *Basil*, who both lived in the *fourth* Century. Nothing can more evidence the *Insincerity* of any Author, than these *Quotations*: For he here quotes Passages by *Halves*, (as we say) the better to mislead his Reader into a favourable Opinion of his *own* Notions; leaving out sometimes, or passing over in Silence *that Part* of a Sentence, which, when produc'd, quite *overturns* the *Doctrine* he is for advancing.

The Text itself, *I and my Father are one*, 'tis well known, has been produc'd by Writers *Ancient* and *Modern* for the *Unity* of *Essence* of *Father* and *Son*; and St. *Chrysostome* is very plain in understanding it so too. But this being a *Doctrine* which the late *Rector* did not then approve of (tho' he formerly *subscrib'd* to the Truth of it) and therefore was to be guarded against throughout his whole Book, endeavours to make that *Father* of the Church support his projected *Scheme*, by his omitting and wilfully stifling, as far as he was able, that *Part* of the *Sentence*, which St. *Chrysostome* makes a necessary *Inference* from the Pre-

* John x. 30.

mises; so that take the whole *Sentence* together, as it there lies, and no Body can question but that it explains the Text for *Unity of Essence*, as well as *Power*, in the *Father* and the *Son*. 'Tis a Passage that ought to be set in its full *Light*; and *St. Chrysostome* speaks in the following Manner:

“ Moreover, that you might not think,
 “ he (*that is, Christ*) is *unable* of himself;
 “ and that 'tis through the *Power* of the
 “ *Father*, that the *Sheep* are in *Safety*, he
 “ added, *I and the Father are one*: As if
 “ he had said, when I declar'd, that no
 “ Man plucketh them (the *Sheep*) away,
 “ my Meaning was not, as if I myself was
 “ *unable* to keep the *Sheep*: For *I and the*
 “ *Father are one*; meaning, as to *Power*:
 “ For his whole Discourse was concerning
 “ *that*: AND IF THE POWER
 “ BE THE SAME, 'TIS EVI-
 “ DENT, THE ESSENCE MUST
 “ BE SO TOO*. This Conclusion of
St. Chrysostome, was what *Dr. Clark* did

* Εἴτα ἵνα μὴ νομίζῃς, ὅτι αὐτὸς μὲν ἔστιν ἀδελφὸς, διὰ τὴν τῷ Πατρὶ δύναμιν ἐν ἀσφαλείᾳ τὰ πρὸς αὐτὰ ἐστίν, ἐπαύσαντο ἐγὼ καὶ ὁ Πατὴρ Ἐν ἑσμέν. ὡς αὐτοὶ ἔλεγον, καὶ διὰ τὸ τοῦτο εἶπον ὅτι διὰ τὴν Πατρὸς ἐξουσίαν, αὐτὰ ἀρπάζει, ὡς αὐτοὶ ἀδελφὸν ἡμεῶν τὰ πρὸς αὐτὰ. Ἐγὼ γὰρ καὶ ὁ Πατὴρ Ἐν ἑσμέν. κατὰ τὴν δύναμιν ἐν ἑαυτῷ λέγον. καὶ γὰρ περὶ ταύτης ἦν ὁ λόγος ἀπὸ αὐτῶ. Εἰ δὲ ἡ ΔΥΝΑΜΙΣ ἡ Αὐτῇ Εἰσῆλθον ὅτι κατ' ἡ ὁμοίαν. Vid. Chrys. opp. Ed. Savil. To. 2. p. 812.

not approve of, and therefore would not acquaint his Reader with it.

But Dr. *Clark* might, if he had pleased, directed his Reader a few Lines farther, where St. *Chrysostome* is likewise very plain in his Notion of *Unity of Essence*: For at the 36th Verse his Remark runs thus——“ If such, “ *says he*, who having the Title of Gods “ through Favour, are not at all questioned “ for so calling themselves; how is it just “ to rebuke *him* (the Son) who has *it* (such “ Title) by *Nature*”? * And at the 38th Verse, where our Saviour says, *But if I do the Works*, &c. St. *Chrysostome* thus paraphrases: “ Do you observe, what Way he “ (the Son) takes in proving, what I said, “ that he (the Son) is nothing *inferior* to “ him (the Father) but is *every Way equal* “ to him: For since it was impossible to “ see his *Essence*, he therefore (the Son) argues for *such an Identity*, from the Equality and Sameness of Power in doing “ the Works which the Father did †.”

The

* Ὁ τῇ φύσει τὸ τοῦ ἔχων.

† Παύλαχος apud *Hesych.* πάντα τρόπον, which accordingly I here render *every way Equal*. As for Ἀπαρραξία here translated *Identity*, 'tis to be observ'd that ἀπαρραξίῳ is render'd by the same *Hesychius*, as well as *Phavorinus* κατὰ μηδὲν παρραλλάσσῃσι. But ἀπαρραξία (here used by St. *Chrysostome*) is rather a Word appropriated to

Ecclesi-

The other Father of the Church, St. Basil, fares no better than the former, in the Manner the Doctor has quoted him for serving his Purpose: For the Reader is still made to believe, that neither St. Basil understands *Unity of Essence* to be concluded from this Text, *John x. 30. I and the Father are one.* Now St. Basil, where the Doctor takes this Passage, is, considering the *Strength* of an Objection, which the *Eunomians* make against the Son's being equal with the Father, from those Words of our Saviour, *John xiv. 28. My Father is greater than I.* St. Basil does this by way of *Induction*, observing first, in what respects one Thing may be said to exceed or be greater than another, viz. either in respect of the *Cause, Power, Dignity, or Magnitude*: He then proceeds to shew, that the Father cannot be greater than the

Ecclesiastical Writers, and is often used by this Father to denote the *ὁμοουσία* or the *Sameness of Essence* of the Father and the Son. 'Tis in this Manner he explains himself on *Gen. i. 26.* (To 5. Hom. 3. p. 9. Ed. Sav.) For, when he says, that Man was made after the *Image or Likeness* of God, he adds, that such *Likeness* is not *ὥστας ἀπαρραξία*, or such as is inseparable from the *Essence*, but some Agreement or *Likeness* in regard to *Dominion*; ἀλλ' ἀρχῆς ὁμοιότης. And in his 3d Hom. on the Gospel of St. John, p. 569. τὸ, καὶ υἱὸν ἔναι πρὸς τὸν πατέρα, καὶ πρὸς αὐτὸν ἀπαρραξίαν δῆλοι, that is, this Saying. That the Son is one with the Father, is a plain Argument for *Unity of Essence*.

Son in the *three last* Respects, and therefore must be understood to be *so* in the *first*. To shew, that the *Father* is not *greater* than the *Son*, in regard to *Power*, St. Basil alledges this Text, *I and the Father are one*; inferring very justly from those Words an *Equality* of *Power* in the *Father* and the *Son*; which is the Passage Dr. Clark produces. But what then? St. Basil is *there* only pursuing his Argument, in order to clear up the Text, *John* xiv. 28. from which the *Eunomians* form'd their Objection. Was it necessary, or indeed proper for St. Basil at that Time to say any thing more than he did, concerning the Text or *Medium* he made use of, *I and the Father are one*? But had the *Doctor* dealt fairly with the *English* Reader, he would have told him what follows; which shews St. Basil had another Use to make of *that Text*: For after such *Induction*, he goes on; “ It remains then, *says he*, that the *Father's* “ being *greater* than the *Son*, is to be understood in respect of the *Cause*; the *Son* “ deriving his *Essence* or *Being* from the “ *Father*.—But yet (*says St. Basil*) according to your own Way of Reasoning, *Essence* is not said to be *greater* or *less* “ than *Essence*; so that according to your “ own Way of arguing (and what indeed is “ really true) this *Text* now before us, (*the Father*

“ *Father being greater than the Son*) does
 “ not by any Means denote *Superiority* or
 “ *Eminency* in respect to the *Essence* of the
 “ *Father and the Son.* * ”

Moreover, *St. Basil*, in the very next Page to *that*, where *Dr. Clark* quotes this Passage, *designedly* makes use of the very same Words again, *I and the Father are one* ; re-assuming that Text as proper to confute another Objection which is there started by *Dr. Clark's* good *Orthodox Christian Eunomius*. The Objection is, “ Since God is “ *Αούρητος*, or a Being, with whom no other can or ought to be compar'd, that “ therefore the *Son* is not to be called *equal* “ with the *Father*”. And what is *St. Basil's* Answer to this? 'Tis such a one, as *Dr. Clark* might and ought to have told an *English* Reader, did sufficiently shew what, in the Judgment of *St. Basil*, was the full Import and Meaning of this Text, *John* x. 30. *I and the Father are one.* “ This is the Text (says *St. Basil*) that we “ will again remind you of: Tell me then, “ is not this Text the Language of him “ who compares himself (with the *Father*)? ”

* Όπως ή ύοια ύοιας, ή κατ'α ή ύμμερον σοφίαν μιλζων ή
 έλαττων ή λέγειται ώς ή κατ'α τύπος ή κατ' αίσλην ή κλύθειαν,
 ή δυνά αν ιερσπω ή κατ' ουσίαν ύπεροχην ή προκαμυον λόγος
 τς Μιλζον ή εμφαίροι. *Basil. opp.* p. 724.

“ Why

“ Why do I say *compare*? rather *uniting*
 “ himself, and by such an Expression de-
 “ scribing or setting forth the *Unity* of *Es-*
 “ *sence*, or the same *immutable* Nature of
 “ both (the *Father* and the *Son*.) *

But St. *Basil* does not only here *occasi-*
onally explain this Text, *John* x. 3. but
 in another Part of his Works he *professed-*
ly treats of these Words, *I and the Father*
are one; and just in the same Manner (that
 is by way of *Induction*) as he did above in
 relation to the other Text, *The Father is*
greater than I. His Argument stands thus:
 “ Incorporeal Beings, says he, are said to
 “ be *one*, in regard either to their *Power*,
 “ their *Will*, or their *Essence*. Our Savi-
 “ our therefore, when he said, *I and my*
 “ *Father are ONE*, spoke it in one of
 “ those Senses. If then they (the *Eunomi-*
 “ *ans*) understand those Words as to *Power*,
 “ it necessarily follows, that they understand
 “ the *Father* and the *Son* to be *ONE* also
 “ as to *Essence*: For where the Nature or
 “ *Essence* differs, there the *Power* cannot
 “ be the *same* or alike. But if they under-

* Ἐγὼ, φησὶ, καὶ ὁ Πατὴρ ἓν εἰσμέν. πάλιν γὰρ τὸ αὐτὸ μνη-
 μονεύομαι. τὴν τοιαύτην μοι, ἐκ τῆς συγκρίσεως ἐαυτὸν ἐπὶ τὸ ῥῆμα;
 τὸ λέγω συγκρίνοντες; ἐν ἑνὶ μὲν ἔν, ὡς εἰπὼν, καὶ τὸ τῆς
 φύσεως Ἀπαράλλακτον πεισῶντες ἐντεῦθεν. *Basil. vid.*
supra.

“ stand such *Unity* in relation to the *Will*,
 “ then the *Son* does not only necessarily
 “ *Will* as the *Father* doth, but the *Father*
 “ as necessarily *Willeth* what the *Son Wills*
 “ likewise; and therefore if the *Son* be com-
 “ manded by the *Father*, he also (the *Son*)
 “ will do the same: But if he (the *Son*) on-
 “ ly be commanded, then is his Ministry
 “ forc’d, and not voluntary-----If therefore
 “ they (the *Eunomians*) understand his be-
 “ ing *One*, neither in relation to *Power* or
 “ *Will*, it remains, according to such way
 “ of Reasoning, that it be understood in
 “ relation to *Essence*; which is the same as
 “ saying, that the *Father* and the *Son* are
 “ of *one* and the same Substance *.

How honestly and Christianly had Dr.
Clark acted, had he laid before his Reader
 the Sense of St. *Basil* in this Matter, which
 he cautiously avoided? Had he questioned
 whether this *fourth* Book of St. *Basil* had
 been *genuine* or no, it had been some sort of
 Defence; and no doubt, he would have
 passed a *Censure* that way, as some others
 have done, if he thought the Objection
 would have done him Service: But he knew
 better, and therefore let the Whole alone.

* Εἰ δὲ ὅτε ἐνεργείᾳ ὅτε βελήσῃ, λείπεται κατ’ αὐτὸς ἢ
 κατ’ οὐσίαν εἶναι, τῶν ὁμοούσιον Πατέρα καὶ υἱόν. *Basil.*
Lib. 4. adv. Eunom. p. 762, 763.

"Tis easy to observe, *St. Basil's* Style and Manner of arguing in this *fourth* Book, does so much resemble that Passage I quoted out of his *first* Book, that there is scarce Room for making any such Objection; and therefore, as *Du Pin* says, "Tho' the *two* last Books are more dry and scholastical, yet we ought not to wonder at that: For in the *first*, says he, *St. Basil* overthrows the principal Arguments of *Eunomius*; and in these *two* last, he insists upon the Refutation of the Subtilties and sophistical Arguments of this *Heretick*, upon many Passages of Holy Scripture, as he had *promised to do* in the *second* Book; and these Books (*fourth* and *fifth*) were quoted as *genuine* by the *Greeks* and *Latins* in the Council of *Florence*." *Suidas* calls these Books in general, writ against *Eunomius* (by way of Excellency) *ἱεραὶς λόγους* choice, eminent Discourses: And had *they* an honest *English* Dress given them, every ordinary Reader would see the Meanness of *Dr. Clark's* Performance; and soon infer, that the Stir and Bustle he and others have been making among us for these thirty Years, has been chiefly reviving *old Heresies*, which have been fully and substantially confuted so many hundred Years ago: I appeal to the Reader, whether this does not appear to be the Case, in reference

to

to those *two* remarkable *Texts* which I have particularly taken Notice of, *John* x, 30. & xiv. 28. and have given the true and Catholick Interpretation of *them* from those two eminent Fathers of the *Christian* Church, *St. Basil* and *St. Chrysostome*; in Opposition to that *insincere* Method practis'd by *Dr. Clark* in his *Quotations* from them and other *Fathers*, to serve his Purpose. "Surely, as a late *Writer* observes very well, *Misrepresentation is always bad; but in Matters of Controversy and Religion, it is most detestable; nothing being either more ungenerous, or more unpardonable, than to deceive others by Design* *.

That *Writer* deserves to be more taken Notice of, not only for Solidity of Argument, but on Account of a *Conference* had with *Dr. Clark* in his own House, *April* 30, 1728; for the *Doctor* being then ask'd, *Whether a true God can be destroy'd or not?* He answer'd, *I know not.*

"To say, that *God* cannot destroy all Creatures (as that *Writer* observes) is Nonsense: But to say, that he can destroy either the *Son* (whom *St. John* calls the *Word*) or the *Holy Spirit*, is *Blasphemy*.

* See an Answer to *Dr. Clark* and *Mr. Whiston*, in *Pref.* &c. by *H. E.* printed 1729.

“ *my*; from which, I do not well see, how
 “ Dr. *Clark* can be excus’d. It seems the
 “ Doctor does not know, whether *Blasphe-*
 “ *my* be a Sin or not. But in my Opinion,
 “ it would have been highly advantageous
 “ for *him* to have learn’d this; tho’ both
 “ the Publick had lost his *Scripture Doc-*
 “ *trine of the Trinity, with his Rule of*
 “ *Faith*, and he the most valued Part of
 “ his *Knowledge* *.

After such a *Specimen* as I have now gi-
 ven of the most *notorious Insincerity* which
 Dr. *Clark* appears guilty of in his *Quota-*
tions from the *Fathers*, in Matters of the
 greatest Importance; is it not *amazing*, to
 find *him* telling the World, as *he* does in
 the Preface to his *Scripture Doctrine* of the
Trinity, that he *produces the Testimonies*
of the Fathers as Illustrations of Scripture
Texts, and to show how easy and natural
that Notion must be allow’d to be, which
so many Writers could not forbear expres-
sing so clearly and distinctly, even frequent-
ly, when at the same Time they were about
to affirm, and endeavouring to prove some-
thing not very consistent with it? Surely
 such *unfaithful Managers* of Controversy
 ought ever to be reckon’d the most dange-

* Ibid p. 3.

rous, because *they* are hardest to fence against; the *proper Weapons* for avoiding *Danger* being designedly removed out of the *Reader's Sight*. When this is the Case, even the most experienc'd must be at some Trouble in detecting the *Deceiver*; but when that is done, 'tis highly reasonable, that every *Reader's Suspicion* should encrease, and that such Treatment should make him more upon his Guard for the future.

I have observ'd above, that *Dr. Clark* made a sort of *Recantation*; *Arius* did the same Thing, *A. D.* 330. he made a *Recantation*, such as it was. *Mr. Whiston* has been very free in censuring *Dr. Clark*, since his Death, as not making an open and full Profession of *Arianism* with himself; and yet in the Opinion of a late *Writer*, I just now quoted *, *Mr. Whiston* has neither been *sincere* in the Way of *professing*, nor *faithful* in quoting ancient *Writers* himself.

“ It is no new Thing, *says he*, to see *Ari-*
 “ *ans* and *Hypocrites* join'd: Since the
 “ Year 1700, *Arianism* has re-appear'd in
 “ *England*; first *openly*, and then under a
 “ *Disguise*. In 1708, and for some Years
 “ after, *Mr. Whiston*, who had taught the
 “ *Mathematicks* in *Cambridge*, was a pro-

* See an Answer to *Dr. Clark* and *Mr. Whiston* by *H. E.* 1739. P. 13.

“ fess’d *Arian*. *Arians* were then * the
 “ *Reservers* of the most *Primitive Doc-*
 “ *trines* ; *Arians* and *Eunomians* were
 “ then † those eminent *Vindicators* of the
 “ most *Primitive Faith*. The *Arian Doc-*
 “ *trine*, then, was in those *Points* (the
 “ *Trinity* and *Incarnation*) most certainly
 “ the original *Doctrine* § of *Christ him-*
 “ self, of his *Apostles*, and of the most *Pri-*
 “ *mitive Christians*. This was then Mr.
 “ *Whiston’s* own ††, not *uncertain Opi-*
 “ *nion*, but *certain Faith*”.

“ But Mr. *Whiston’s* *C E R T A I N*
 “ *F A I T H* was, in his *Opinion*, soon
 “ demolish’d : For in the Year 1713, in
 “ his noble *Essay*, entitl’d, The *Council* of
 “ *Nice* vindicated from the *Athanasian He-*
 “ *resy*, he was a *profess’d Eusebian*. Then
 “ the *Arian Doctrines* ** were the novel
 “ *Doctrines* and *Language*, which *Arius*
 “ himself, and his peculiar *Followers*, in-
 “ troduc’d. Then the *Arian Rashness* †,
 “ which---said, that the *Son* was made
 “ out of *Nothing*, was on both *Sides* con-
 “ demn’d, both by *Eusebians* and *Athana-*
 “ *fians*.

* See his *Primitive Christianity*, Tom. 4. in *Append.*
 P. 10. 1711.

† Ibid. *Append.* 53.

§ Ibid. Tom. 1. p. 6, 7, and *Supplement* p. 65.

†† Ibid p. 65.

** Ibid p. 4.

‡ Ibid p. 7.

“ As to the *Eusebians*, they were, according to Mr. *Whiston* * *the most uncor-*
 “ *rupt Body of the Church*. And by the
 “ *Christian Doctrine*, says he, *I mean the*
 “ *real Doctrines of the Eusebians* *.

“ Had Mr. *Whiston* been acquainted
 “ with Church History, his professing him-
 “ self to be an *Eusebian*, would have been
 “ the same as professing himself to be an
 “ *Arian Hypocrite* ; (the very Fault he
 “ finds with Dr. *Clark*) but tho’ his Igno-
 “ rance acquits him from this absurd Impu-
 “ tation, it casts him into another as great :
 “ For whilst he profess’d himself an *Euse-*
 “ *bian*, he was (without knowing it) a pro-
 “ fess’d *Arian*.

“ When he writ his Letter to the Earl of
 “ *Nottingham*, 1721, he was an *Eusebian*.
 “ He censur’d *the unjustifiable Rashness*
 “ *and Folly of Arius* † : And on the other
 “ Hand informs us **, *that the Eusebians*
 “ *agreed with him, in rejecting all Human*
 “ *Additions and novel Terms of Art, whe-*
 “ *ther on the Arian or Athanasian Side,*
 “ *and so preserv’d the Christian Worship*
 “ *in its ancient Purity*. But at the very
 “ same Time Mr. *Whiston* grants, and even
 “ pretends to prove ††, *that the Word of God,*

* Ibid p. 4.
 † Pref. p. 24.

† Ibid p. 3, 4.
 ** Ibid.

†† Ibid p. 28.

“ *our blessed Lord, even in his highest Ca-*
 “ *capacity, was truly created by the Father;*
 “ which was the chief and most fundamen-
 “ tal Error of *Arius*; and an Error, which
 “ none of the *Eusebians* durst maintain, till
 “ they began to lay aside their Mask, which
 “ was not till many Years after the Coun-
 “ cil of *Nice*. Mr. *Whiston* therefore had
 “ spoken with much more Accuracy, if in-
 “ stead of assuming to himself the Name of
 “ *Eusebian*, he had bestowed this Title on
 “ his Friend Dr. *Clark*.

“ In the Close of this Epistle, where
 “ Mr. *Whiston* gives a large Account of *A-*
 “ *thanasian Confessions*, he mentions by
 “ Way of Postscript * *Nazianzen's Confes-*
 “ *sion*: But this, as he represents it, is a
 “ manifest Mis-translation of St. *Gregory*
 “ *Nazianzen's* Words; for the Words only
 “ imply, that St. *Athanasius*, in a Synod at
 “ *Alexandria*, A. D. 363, and in his Letter
 “ to the Emperor *Jovian*, was inspir'd to
 “ assert, what he had always believ'd, that
 “ the *Holy Spirit is consubstantial with the*
 “ *Father and the Son*: So that Mr. *Whis-*
 “ *ton's Confusion* might perhaps have been
 “ a more suitable Title, than *Nazianzen's*
 “ *Confession*.

* Ibid p. 92.

“ Dr. *Clark* (as we have too much Reason to believe) is (was) a hearty Well-wisher to the Doctrine, for which Mr. *Whiston* was turn'd out of *Cambridge*:
 “ But he acted more out of Sight; perhaps because he had more to lose. However it is (it was) his whole *System* centers in this, which he is not (has not been) willing openly to assert, that both the *Son* and the *Holy Spirit* is a *Creature*. And what is this but downright *Arianism*?
 “ This is the modish Religion of the Age: And if the Government does not interpose, it is not to be doubted, but *Arianism*, in a short Time, will devour all other Parts of the *Reformation* in *England*.

I have not charg'd Dr. *Clark*, nor yet Mr. *Whiston*, with any wilful premeditated Design of serving the Cause of the Church of *Rome*; but if Men of such Principles shall be deem'd *Members* of the Church of *England*, I am very sure the *Romanists* have a great Advantage given them in arguing with us. Shall *they* be told, that all the Articles of the Christian Belief are manifestly deliver'd in the Books of Scripture, as we now have 'em, or that they are to us now, not only the Rule, but the Whole and the only Rule of Truth in Matters of Religion,

as Dr. *Clark* expresses it *; and will *they* not reply, How comes that fundamental Article then to be question'd amongst you, *Whether the Son and the Holy Spirit are Creatures or not?* If it is not *clear* in the Scripture, *say they*, as we now have it, that *the Son is not a Creature* (and thus in your many *Metaphysical* Discourses publish'd and tolerated, this great Article is litigated) it follows, that the *Rule of Faith*, which Dr. *Clark*, and others amongst you, talk of, must be *false*, viz. that all the Articles of the Christian Faith are plain in the Scripture, as we now have it.

Indeed the Writer against Dr. *Clark* and Mr. *Whiston* (already taken Notice of) presses this Point so much, that some me he inclin'd to think, he is really a *Romanist* himself, and that he is endeavouring, thro' the sides of such *pretended* Members, to wound the *Church of England* itself. However that be, the Argument is just; and no honest Member of our Church can be otherways affected by it, than with a deep Concern to see such Numbers of *pretended* Members encreasing amongst us. "The Primitive Christians" knew, says this Writer, whether the *Fa-*

* Introduction to the Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity,
p. 4.

† Pref. p. 17.

“ *ther alone* is the Object of *Divine Wor-*
 “ *ship* properly speaking, or not. They
 “ knew whether the *Son* and the *Holy Spi-*
 “ *rit* are, or are not *Creatures*; that is, Be-
 “ ings which God made, and can unmake
 “ at Pleasure: For if they knew not this,
 “ the *Apostles* themselves were extremely
 “ *deficient*, in neither teaching them the
 “ Object of *Divine Worship*, nor the Sense
 “ of their *Creed*, nor the Meaning of their
 “ *Baptism*; which *Christ* commanded ’em
 “ to give to *all Nations*, in the Name of
 “ *the Father, of the Son, and of the Ho-*
 “ *ly Spirit*; nor one of the most essential
 “ Parts of the *New Testament*”. And if
 these *Points* (as Dr. *Clark* supposes) cannot
 be certainly *known* from the Scripture, as
 we now have it, but only the Characters
 and Offices of the Divine Persons; ’tis a
 Demonstration, that the *Scripture*, as we
 now have it, is not the *whole Rule* of Chris-
 tian Faith.

Thus Dr. *Clark*, by a Cloud of *Meta-*
physicks, obscures the Scripture in that which
 was a plain *Article* of the Primitive *Faith*,
 and yet declares at the same Time, that all
 the Articles of the Primitive Faith are plain
 in the Scripture, as we now have it. The
 Scripture evidently informs us, that the Fa-
 ther is *uncreated*: Yet the *Doctor* says *

* P. 210. Prop. 4.

What the proper metaphysical Nature, Essence or Substance of any of these (three) Divine Persons is, the Scripture has no where at all declar'd. But what then? Did the first Christians know, whether Divine Honour is due to the Father alone, or to the Father and Son only; or to the Father, to the Son, and to the Holy Spirit? Was this an Article of the Christian Faith from the Beginning? 'Tis plain it was: And must it not be so still, because we are not let into the Knowledge, What is the metaphysical Essence, or Substance, and abstract Attributes of these Divine Persons? Must School Questions be decided in the Scripture, or must we otherwise deny our Assent to such Things there, which are known only by Faith? Our Knowledge and Learning will ever lead us into dangerous Errors, if we forget that Humility that is so necessary to make it useful; and the learned Writer, already cited, very justly calls Dr. Clark's metaphysical Notions, when apply'd to the Blessed Trinity, meer Mummery and Gibberish.

It would be a very becoming Modesty in all our *Free-thinkers*, and yet nothing more than what is due from them, would they acknowledge that there are many Things known to God as *infallible Truths*; many Things as *possible*, and some Things as *Facts*;
of

of which, if these Gentlemen's boasted *Philosophy* were to judge by *natural Principles* alone, they would think *them* to be no better than *real* and *manifest Contradictions*: And why? Because, say they, we either want proper, adequate, and clear *Ideas* of the Things themselves; or we do not know the necessary *Premises* from which they follow; or we are forc'd to judge of *unknown* Things by others which are *known*. *Vain Man would be wise, says Job, tho' Man be born like a wild Ass's Colt* *. The *Heathen* had as strong Pretensions to *Reason* and *Philosophy*, as any *Free-thinkers* amongst our selves. But *St. Paul* thought it proper to give a *Caution* to the People at *Coloss* in this respect: *Beware lest any Man spoil you (or make a Prey of you) through (Heathen) Philosophy and vain Deceit* †.

The Vanity and Weakness of all Human Learning and Philosophy, ought ever to be expos'd, when set up in Opposition to *Revelation*; as is now practis'd by our *Free-thinkers*. He that so well answers *Dr. Clark* and *Mr. Whiston*, has done it to our Hands, in Hopes of serving the common Cause of *Christianity*; and with the same View I

* Job xi. 12.

† Col. ii. 8. Ὁ συλαγωγῶν διὰ τῆς φιλοσοφίας καὶ κενῆς ἀπάτης.

shall close the *Postscript*, heartily wishing, that *Reflections* so easy and natural, just and strong, may have a due Effect on the Minds of a deluded *Sect* amongst us, who lay so much Stress upon *Reason* and *Philosophy*, whilst they reject the *reveal'd* Will of God as not consonant thereto. Dr. *Clark*, says he, has (*had*) an establish'd Reputation, both in natural Philosophy, and in the Mathematics: Yet I may be bold to say, that there are many *Premises* unknown to him, as learned as he is (*was*) both in Nature, in the Mathematics, and in other Sciences; that he has (*had*) many *confus'd Ideas*, even of the most obvious Things, as of *Matter*, of *Motion*, of *Time*, of *Place*, of *Thought*, and of all the different *Compositions* and *Propagations* of *Animals*, *Plants*, *Flowers*, and other Vegetables. Without *clear Ideas* we can be naturally and scientifically sure of nothing. And there are but few Things in the Universe, of which our Ideas are clear: And how often are we mistaken, in mixing and misplacing our *Ideas* themselves? Is it not then the Height of Impudence to imagine, that every Philosopher is an infallible Judge both of what is *Impossible*, and of what is *Possible*? We know in general, what *Possibility* and *Impossibility* means; that all Things are *Possible*

sible which do not imply a *Contradiction*; and that only those are *Impossible* which do. But to say, that we can apply these Notions, by the Light of Nature, to all particular Objects without Danger of Error, and that we cannot mistake *infallible Truths* for *manifest Contradictions*, is to say, that we can naturally take the Measure of God's Omnipotency, and that tho' he knows more *Facts* than we do, yet merely in regard to the *Possibility* and *Impossibility* of Things, our Knowledge is equal to his. But that Men, who scarce know any Thing, should pretend thus, like Giants, to scale Heaven, and to place themselves with *Lucifer* in the Seat of God, is a most outrageous Blasphemy.

If a Junior Philosopher or Mathematician, before he is led, by a long Train and Chain of Consequences, to know the due *Premises* of a demonstrative Conclusion, may, in the mean Time, reasonably believe such a Master as *Euclid*, or Sir *Isaac Newton* was, why may not a Christian, in regard to reveal'd Truths, reasonably believe God, *till the Day-star arise in our Hearts**, and the necessary *Premises* be discover'd, from which all the infallible Truths of Christianity are deriv'd; tho' some of these Truths, if hu-

* 2 Pet i. 19.

man *Philosophy* were to be judge of them by *natural* Principles only, would appear to be real and manifest Contradictions? As the Blessed Trinity; Original Sin; the Incarnation of the Son of God, and our Redemption by his taking our Sins upon himself; that endless Punishments of Sin are consistent with the Divine Goodness; and that the permitting of Sin was consistent with it; the Certainty of future Contingents; the Confederacy between the *Free-will* of Men, the *Necessity* of Divine Grace for all Actions tending to Salvation, and the *Fore-knowledge* of whatever we do *freely*, and of our eternal State.

For we find by sad Experience, that scarce any Thing is more usual, than it is for Men, and even for Philosophers, to err concerning the *Possibility* of Things, and to take *infallible Truths* for *manifest Contradictions*: But that we might not (as Dr. Clark has done) *explain* away Faith, under a Pretence of making it more *Rational*, the first Christians were diligently forewarned against all the Attempts of worldly Philosophy: They were taught to esteem all *its* Batteries and Bulwarks, as human Inventions, romantick Forts and Castles in the Air; and were train'd up in the humble Discipline of our Blessed Redeemer's Camp, for *the pulling down of strong Holds, for casting*
ing

ing down Imaginations (or vain Reasonings λογισμὸς) *and every high Thing that exalts it self against the Knowledge of God, and for bringing into Captivity every Thought to the Obedience of Christ* *.

One Thing more I must add, because it is unanswerable; I mean, that those who pretend to know so very exactly the Extent of God's infinite Power, see and experience Things every Day, which, if they had not this Experience of them, they would have judg'd by the natural Principles of *Reason* and *Philosophy*, to be evidently *Impossible*. Of this Kind is, *First*, Matter or Quantity. *Secondly*, Local Motion. *Thirdly*, The Productions, both of innumerable Sorts of Animals, and of Vegetables, by Seeds both so small, and so very unlike to the Things which are produc'd by them. Which shews the prodigious *Folly* and *Pride* of *Philosophers*, who undertake to set Bounds to the Omnipotence and Knowledge of God, without knowing *à priori* the Possibility and Machinism of an Ant, a Fly, a Tulip, or a Grain of Sand; as St. *Basil* rightly answer'd the proud Arian *Eunomius* †. For this Pride and Folly it seems, was much too early to be thought the Invention of our wicked Age.

* 2 Cor. x. 4, 5.

† Ep. 168. p. 188. Tom. 3.

Philosophy, if we were not sure, by Experience, of the Existence of *Bodies*, might and would have concluded from natural Principles of Reason, that *Bodies* and *Matter* are a plain Contradiction : For how can a *finite Extension* consist of *infinite Parts*, either really or virtually distinct from one another ? Yet Dr. *Clark* is (*was*) able to demonstrate, that every Particle of *Extension*, how small soever, consists of *infinite Parts* ; and that there are more Parts in the Point of a Needle, than there are Stars in the Heavens, Atoms in the Sun-beams, Sands on the Earth, and Drops in the Sea. But how can so many *Extensions* be crowded into the Point of a Needle ?

As to *local Motion*, how can any Part of it be made, be it ever so small, without running over a Space of *infinite Parts* ? And, in a *finite Duration*, how can *infinite Parts* be run over ? Is not passing over distinct Parts a virtual Numeration ? And is it not impossible to number *infinite Parts* ? So that *Matter* and *Motion*, setting aside Experience, that is, if we judge them by *natural Principles* only, will appear to be no better than *Contradictions*.

The same may be said of all the innumerable Productions of all Animals, and all Vegetables : For none of these Productions can have its Effect without a Reason. And
who

who has ever yet been able to discover any Reason, why from the *Seeds* of an *Oak*, we should rather have *Oaks* than *Elms*, or *Castles*, or *Ships*, or *Whales*, or whatever else you please? And why the *Leaves* of an *Oak* might not be as fruitful as its *Seeds*?

Now if *Experience* can convince us, that many Things are *Possible*, and happen daily, which to Human Reason would otherwise appear to be manifest *Contradictions*; why may not *Revelation* be trusted in Cases of the like Nature? Why may not God, I say, be trusted as well as his *Creatures*? Or can any thing be more detestable than the *Folly* and *Pride* of Philosophers, who make that very Thing an *Objection* against Religion, which they would laugh at otherwise, on a thousand Occasions? And who are so quick-sighted, or rather so impudent, as to prescribe to *God*, and to teach him what he can, or cannot, either know or do; tho' they are as blind as *Moles* in the most ordinary Effects of Nature. In these the Mercy of God has left us in the Dark, that we may never presume to search into the Manner of his Being, or into the Extent of his Power. *Gird up now thy Loyns like a Man, for I will demand of thee* (says the Almighty) *and answer thou me. Where wast thou, when I laid the Foundations*
 O of

of the Earth? Declare if thou hast Understanding. Who hath laid the Measures thereof, if thou knowest? Or who hath stretched the Line upon it? Whereupon are the Foundations thereof fastned? Or who laid the Corner Stone thereof?—Harken unto this, O Job; stand still and consider the wondrous Works of God; touching the Almighty, we cannot find him out: He is excellent in Power, and in Judgment, and in Plenty of Justice: He will not afflict: Men do therefore fear him; he respecteth not any that are wise of Heart*.

There is a growing Dishonesty too visible amongst the present Managers for *Heresy* and *Infidelity*. The *New Testament* lately publish'd in *Greek* and *English* is a melancholy Proof of it; and a judicious and learned Writer † has happily rescu'd the sacred *Pen-men* from the Ill-usage they met with from the Hands of that Editor: What wilful Mistakes are shewn to be in this *Version*? What *Fallacy* detected in the *Notes* on this New Edition; and by such *Fallacy* the *Inspiration* of some Books was to be call'd in question? And what unpardonable *Frauds* are discover'd in the various Readings of that

* Job xxxvii. 38.

† See Mr. *Twells* Critical Examination of the late New Text and Version of the *New Testament*.

Editor? This was a bold Attack, and it was a Work, upon which our *Free-thinkers* knew a great deal depended : but to what Purpose all their *Pretensions* to superior Learning and Penetration, when so much *Insincerity*, *Falshood*, and *Dishonesty* must appear in their Management? If our *Superiors* shall not think fit, wholly to deprive Men of that *Freedom*, which has, and is taken in debating *fundamental* Doctrines, or the *Truth* of *Christianity* itself; yet I must agree with the learned Writer just mentioned, that it seems but reasonable, that such *Freedom* or *Liberty* should be put under some *Regulations*. “ For no Man has either a natural
 “ or acquired Right to be *fraudulent*, and
 “ to *prevaricate*; and therefore such Things
 “ may be *penal*, without encroaching upon
 “ Privileges of any kind. Let Religion have
 “ the same Security against *Slander* and *Li-*
 “ *bellling*, which is allow’d to every pri-
 “ vate Person, that has not forfeited the
 “ *Protection* of *Justice*; and where it ap-
 “ pears, that the Enemies to *Christianity*
 “ support their Cause by Allegations, *plain-*
 “ *ly and notoriously false*, let the Law be
 “ open, as in Cases of *personal Detraction*.
 “ As such Proceedings would invade no
 “ Man’s Rights, so they would greatly
 “ promote the only laudable End of *Free-*
 “ *enquiry*, the *Discovery* of the *Truth*.
 “ For

“ For by these Means Controversies in Religion would be reduc’d into a narrower Compass, and be at once, both more *summarily*, and more *effectually* decided.

I have nothing more to trouble the Reader with at present, than in saying, that this *Specimen* of Dr. Clark’s *Insincerity*, in a Matter of the greatest Importance, was writ and publish’d to the World above *twelve* Years ago. I mention this, only to obviate an *Objection*, that might otherwise be made in my drawing up so heavy a *Charge* since his *Death*. I declare at the same Time, that I ever had a real and great Esteem for the personal Endowments of that Gentleman. I read his *moral* Discourses, and every one justly commends them : But let even such be read with *Caution*. Many noted *Soci-nians*, and other *Hereticks*, have excell’d that Way ; and ’tis fit the *English* Reader should know it, and be the less surpriz’d, when he finds *Philosophy* introducing *Heresy* under the strongest Pretensions to *Morality* ; which is amiable in the Eyes of all, and what our Saviour intended by his Divine Discourses to raise to the greatest Perfection. I have reprinted this Charge against Dr. Clark, because I think the Defence of a *fundamental Truth* now requires it. Our Thoughts are not *safe*, neither in the *Closet* nor the *Church*, if Dr. Clark’s Notions prevail

prevail about the *Honour* and *Worship* we are to pay to the *Son* and the *Holy Spirit*. This I firmly believe is the evil Tendency of Dr. *Clark's* Book, call'd the *Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity*; and in this Belief I hope to live and die,

T. D.

F I N I S.



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prevail about the House and the people were
to say to the Lord and the Holy Spirit. This
I heartily believe is the evil tendency of
Dr. Clarke's Book, and the danger of the
truth of the Trinity, and in this Book I
hope to live and die.

F I V I - 2



